

REPORT FOR SYNOD - SPRING 2016

ISLE OF MAN METHODIST DISTRICT

A big thank you to all our Methodist friends - many of you held collections and special fundraising activities over Christmas. This resulted in over £25,000 being sent to us in January alone from churches in the North West!

Action for Children – just some of our services in the North West:

Burnley Wood Children's Centre South West Burnley Children's Centre

We work with parents to be, parents and children to promote the physical, intellectual and social development of babies and young children - particularly those who are disadvantaged - so that they can flourish at home and when they get to school, and therefore break the cycle of disadvantage for the current generation of young children.

Blackburn with Darwen Crime Prevention Service

We provide one to one and group support for young people at risk of becoming involved in committing crime and for families with one or more members at risk of becoming involved in organised crime.

Wigan Parental Outreach

Across the borough, we deliver parenting groups which take place over a number of sessions and increase parent confidence and skills. We accept referrals from a range of sources such as social workers, housing, and also health care professionals. Following our intervention, parents are able to have a more active involvement in their child's learning, whilst increasing confidence and sustainability of new parenting skills resulting in an improved family life.

Liverpool Junior Mentoring

Many churches and other groups have chosen to allocate their donations and fundraising activities directly to our Junior Mentoring service in Liverpool. Thanks to your support we can literally transform the lives of primary aged children who are referred to us by their school. Here is the story of 'E' as told to us by his mentor:

Background

E was referred to the Mentoring Service by his school who was concerned that he was withdrawn and seemed isolated, with not many friends. E was 11 years old at the start of the mentoring programme. He lives with his Dad and Grandad in inner city Liverpool after Mum left when he was only a few months old. Mum now has two other children and sees E on occasions although these visits are often cancelled at the last minute and there is no routine around them. E has some learning difficulties and although not fully diagnosed, it's felt by the school that he may have mild Asperger's Syndrome. He excels in science and maths but struggles with English and handwriting.

He is not interested in sport, especially football, which can leave him isolated amongst his peers in school. He spends a lot of time on his own playing on his X-box.

Mentoring Programme

It was felt that E needed a positive female role model in his life. He was receiving a lot of love and support from his Dad and Grandad but was being let down by his mum. He needed to have more of a focus in school and concentrate on trying to improve his English and handwriting. He also needed to be shown other activities and things to do apart from playing on his X-box. In his final year of primary school everyone around E had to work together to try and make his transition to secondary school as smooth as possible.

My experience

E and I clicked as soon as we met. He has a wonderful dry sense of humour and was perfectly behaved throughout our time together. We set ourselves a few goals and I promised him that our time together would be fun as well as focussing on some of the things he wasn't too keen on. So, we had a combination of meeting at the Mentoring Service one week after school, then going out the following weekend to do something a bit more fun (but often educational, although he didn't always realise that!)

Some of the things we did:

- Bowling – E wanted to improve his bowling as he had always played using the frame to guide the ball. In our first session we didn't use the frame and he scored a strike which gave him loads of confidence. Bowling became very popular as an activity after that! It was also very close to where he lives so hopefully something he could do with friends in the next couple of years.
- We made a kite – built it from scratch. E project managed the whole thing using his planning skills and attention to detail. We took it to Crosby beach on a very, very windy day and it flew first time – in fact other big professional kites found the weather too windy.
- Crosby beach became a favourite place and we often went there just to walk and chat. I took my daughters black Labrador with us one day and E loved that. Even though we had to stick to a healthy eating regime when we were out – we always finished the day with a hot chocolate as a treat.
- We went to the Catalyst museum in Widnes which E loved because of his interest in science. We both made soap!
- We went to the Central Library in Liverpool and spent a lot of time choosing books. E joined the library and one of his goals was to read a new book every month and talk about it in class.
- We went to Liverpool Museum early on in our year together but it was very busy and I realised that E was not comfortable in crowds and a lot of noise so I took that into consideration when planning other trips.
- We played golf at the driving range – something new for both of us!
- We also went on picnics, to a pantomime and to the cinema.
- E also went to two group workshops at the mentoring service.

The activities above may all seem like fun days out, but each one of them was carefully planned and gave me the opportunity to learn more about E and give us the chance to chat about things that he was worried about. He didn't often talk about his mum but he did talk about his time at school and how he felt isolated.

At the end of the year we achieved the following:

- Following meetings at school with teachers, Dad, Angela from the mentoring service and myself, it was recognised that E needed extra support which the school was prepared to fund.
- E joined three after school clubs which meant he was spending time with peers who had the same interests as him
- We worked on his handwriting which his teachers said was greatly improved
- His English results improved
- He was top of the class in maths (although I cannot take any credit for that)
- E realised that he didn't need to have loads of friends, even one friend or having someone to talk to can make all of the difference

- E realised that there was more to life than X-box and that there were new hobbies and activities that he could try again with Dad and his friends

I found my year as a mentor rewarding, exciting and I learned a lot things about myself as well as supporting E. The training given prior to the mentoring was excellent and I learned so much which I even now apply to my daily life. The hard part was ending the year with E, but we always knew that was going to happen and we were well prepared. I did hear that E achieved the highest results than any pupil ever in Maths when he left primary school, all other subjects had greatly improved. He was also settling in well at high school. I think I was lucky to be matched with such a lovely young man as E and I know he was fortunate to have people who love him at home. I do feel that the mentoring programme helped him with his transition into high school and gave him a far more positive outlook on life and what he wants to achieve. He became so much more confident. I know that at times it was difficult for him talking about his worries, and hard for him to be told about some things that needed to change in order for him to be accepted, but he also had to realise how great he was and that anyone having him in their lives would be very lucky.

Action for Children Campaigning

We give children and young people a voice – we are constantly lobbying government for change and raising awareness of current issues. To find out more and to email your MP – please visit : www.actionforchildren.org.uk/campaigns

The Giant Wiggle is back!

The Giant Wiggle is a fun-filled sponsored walk for under 5s in partnership with The Very Hungry Caterpillar™. Over its first two years the event has raised over £149,000 and has grown from 32,000 children to an incredible 54,000 children taking part in creative storytelling, arts, crafts, nature trails and healthy eating – all aspects of the much loved children’s book, The Very Hungry Caterpillar™.

Your event can take place on any day during The Giant Wiggle week of 21st-27th March, or even another date suitable for you around that time.

We and The Very Hungry Caterpillar™ really hope you might join us in 2016 to bring to life the number one read children’s story in the UK and enjoy a Giant Wiggle Walk along the way! To register simply go to : <https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/how-you-can-help/fundraise/fundraising-events/the-giant-wiggle/>

Action for Children Sunday 2016

This year the anniversary of our founding is on 10th July and as always there will be a worship booklet, prayer cards and gift envelopes to use in your churches. Please get in touch if you would like more information. For those of you on our mailing list, you should receive this information automatically.

League of Light



These little boxes continue to raise over £500,000 annually and are a really simple but effective way of supporting us. If you would like one, please contact either your box secretary at church or your local Action for Children fundraiser.

Legacies

Leaving a gift in your Will is a wonderful way to make a real and lasting difference to vulnerable children. If anyone would like more information on leaving a legacy or materials to promote legacies, please contact your local fundraiser or e-mail the legacies team:

legacies@actionforchildren.org.uk

Talks & Presentations

If you would like to know more about Action for Children please think about inviting your local fundraiser to talk to the congregation or perhaps a fellowship group or community group. We are always keen to promote Action for Children outside the Methodist Church and spread the word so do please get in touch.

Fundraising Events & Activities

Morecambe Bay Sponsored Walk – Saturday 13 August

Join us on this famous walk across the sands led by the Queen's Guide, Cedric Robinson. This is just one example of the many activities you can get involved in throughout the year. Please contact us below for further information and to register.

The Queen's 90th birthday celebration

Finally, our Patron, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will celebrate her **90th** birthday on 21st April 2016. Why not celebrate by holding your very own birthday party (or even a garden party!) and aim to raise **£90** for Action for Children. We can provide posters and other materials you may need.



THE QUEEN'S
90TH BIRTHDAY
CELEBRATION

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