



Christmas Newsletter 2011

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The Passage

HELPING HOMELESS PEOPLE since 1980



Dear Friends



As Christmas approaches, we prepare to get ready. Ready for the great feast of Christmas; the amazing gift, given freely to us all, of the baby Jesus. Ready for a time of celebration; ready to spend time with our family and friends, in our home or in the home of loved ones.

I, like many people, am so lucky to have my family around me, not just at Christmas but throughout the year. For those on the streets however, or on their own, Christmas can be a desperate time.

At The Passage this Christmas, our residential projects will provide a warm, safe and secure place for those who have been living on the streets recently. Our street team will be out (as they are every single night throughout the year) to ensure that for those still on the streets there is someone there to help them come off those streets and into warmth and safety.

However, at The Passage we work to ensure that the focus is not just about Christmas but about the long term.

Since The Passage was set up by Cardinal Basil Hume and the Daughters of Charity 31 years ago, we have worked with over 100,000 people. Some have been able to come off the streets quickly due to our intervention whereas for others, due to their very complex needs, it has taken time for them to complete that journey.

With your support, this Christmas can be a time of hope and real change for those sleeping on the streets.



A homeless person meeting Ronnie, a street team volunteer

Coming Home for Good



As well as intervening quickly to get the newly homeless off the street as soon as possible, we also never give up on those who, for complex reasons, have been homeless for some time. People like George.

George is an elderly gentleman and had been homeless for many years after losing his flat near Waterloo due to being unable to cope with everyday life and care properly for himself. This year, after many years being homeless, George will spend his first Christmas off the streets and in a Passage project.

George was well known to our street team. Due to his age and vulnerability he has received a number of offers of care or hostel accommodation over the years. He was however unable to look beyond the possibility of moving back to 'his' flat and would definitely not move into a hostel. He remained street homeless, including the last two severe winters.

Trust is a big thing for us all and for George it was difficult to trust and indeed to accept help; particularly after many years of working and being able to look after himself. The Passage never gave up on George though. We were always trying to find creative ways to get him to come into the safety of one of our projects.

Eventually he agreed to move into one of our residential projects that offers self contained flats, on a trial basis. We knew that George finds it difficult to relate to new people, so our outreach worker who has known George for four years is visiting him regularly to make sure he is okay. **Slowly George is learning to trust more and more, and slowly piecing his life back together in an environment that he now calls “home.”**

Can you help?



The last couple of winters have seen very severe weather in London and we anticipate the same this year. Christmas is a time when we remember those less fortunate than ourselves, such as those who are homeless and on the streets facing all elements.

At The Passage it is always so heart warming to see how the true message of Christmas is not forgotten, but shared with those we work with through the love and generosity of so many people who help us achieve our mission of providing resources which encourage, inspire and challenge homeless people to transform their lives.

Last year there was a very real fear that we would not be able to continue to provide these resources to those most in need, as The Passage had to make savings of £500,000 due to cuts in funding. With your support we have been able to ensure that despite these cuts not one Passage project has had to close. However, with threats of a double dip recession we have real fears that there will be more cuts on the way; with your continued support though we will find a way to ensure we will still be there.

We don't give up because we can't give up; not when people like George need us. So, please continue to support The Passage if you can.

We use donated money wisely. In fact **for every £1 a person gives to The Passage in voluntary donations over 90 pence goes to services** and not swallowed up in fundraising and administration, making a real and lasting difference to those most in need.

Homeless people don't just need a roof over their heads, but something that we often take for granted; a home. Your support for our work ensures that many who are on the streets now can be home not just for Christmas, but one day can be home for good.

In the run up to Christmas we will all be busy trying to find the right thing to buy for so many of our loved ones; this year why not look to get an extra present for those The Passage works with every day of the year?

Thank You



My thanks to everyone who has supported The Passage over the last year. **Please continue to help us, and make Christmas a time of real hope and change for those who find themselves homeless and vulnerable.**

On behalf of George and the thousands of other people just like him that The Passage works with, day in-day out, I thank you again for all your support.

I wish a joyous Christmas and a peaceful New Year to you and your family.

Mick Clarke, Chief Executive

Christmas 2011

PS Our Christmas Newsletter is sent to all our supporters. If you have recently made a donation or supported the 'Night under the Stars' concert, please accept my grateful thanks.

For information on next year's events - watch our website.

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