

bccs news



bccs
a children's charity for
Essex and East London

 @bccs_charity  bccscharity

A Christmas Message

Nativity scenes of all different sizes and styles will soon be going up in churches, schools and homes across our diocese and throughout the world. From the very first living nativity scene set up by St Francis, the figures of Mary, Joseph, shepherds, animals and of course the infant Jesus help us bring to mind the reality of this strange event – God coming to live among us, as one of us.

Last year my parish received a new set of crib figures, a gift from a parishioner in memory of a loved one. I was particularly struck by the baby Jesus, arms outstretched as if longing to be picked up for a cuddle. It seems to me there are two messages in this image: firstly, that God is reaching out to us in the birth of his son; and secondly that we can encounter him in all those who need to be 'picked up', to experience love and care.

A word we use in connection with Christmas is 'incarnation' – literally 'taking flesh' – a word that describes the extraordinary way God comes to us in Christ. The only way for us to properly experience and appreciate God's love for us was for Love to take on human existence. Our love for others also

needs to 'take flesh', to be visible in real concrete actions. This is exactly what **bccs** does – reaching out to those in need of a particular kind of support. There are an increasing number of young people who need this support, who need to know that they are loved and valued, that there are people who care for them, that they do not need to suffer alone. The services **bccs** has been providing for the past 35 years are able to meet a real need, at the time when it is needed, in a professional and compassionate way. This is only possible thanks to the dedication of the staff, the unstinting efforts of volunteers, and the extraordinary generosity of so many supporters. When you look at the crib, please think not only of the Christ-child, but all those children who need the kind of support **bccs** offers, and if there is a collection basket nearby, please be as generous as you can!



Fr Matthew Bemand-Qureshi
Diocesan Director & Chaplain for Marriage & Family Life
bccs Trustee

2019 is going to be big year for **bccs** as it sees us celebrating a significant milestone in our history: 35 years of supporting children and families throughout Essex and East London.

We are planning a year full of reflection, celebration and merriment and there will be lots of different ways you can join us as we mark this important milestone.

Like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check in at www.bccs.org.uk to make sure you do not miss out on all our news and special celebrations!

Providing support for
35 years



www.bccs.org.uk

The Director Writes ...



As another busy year at **bccs** draws to a close I thought it would be useful to reflect on our achievements throughout 2018. This year we have worked in close partnership with over 110 schools providing counselling, social work and therapy services supporting over 2,500 children and their families.

A recent survey of 140 local authorities in England reported that "90% of the NHS budget for Mental health was spent on adults, if more could be used for children then mental health problems could be avoided in later years" (Association of Directors of Children's Services). **bccs** provides the early intervention services to mitigate against such emotional and mental health issues by working closely with parents and carers, school staff and children.

This year also saw the launch of our two new counselling and therapy rooms at our office in Rayleigh allowing us to provide direct support to

families and children. This new arm of the charity is staffed by experienced counsellors providing a range of therapeutic services including parental therapy, dyadic work, play and art therapy. So far, we have delivered over 400 sessions.

A survey by Young Minds UK showed that "teachers spend an average of 4.5 hours every week responding to concerns around their students' well-being and mental health". As a consequence, our training delivery directly to school staff to support them in managing this has been a big growth area with delivery to over 40 schools this year so far. School staff have also requested that groups of students receive training. Our Exam Stress workshops have been particularly popular with GCSE and A level students in supporting them to manage their anxieties and approach their exams calmly and confidently. Primary schools requested that we devise an interactive session to help children communicate and manage their anxieties and these sessions have helped children verbalise and manage their emotions leaving them feeling less overwhelmed.

We are looking forward to continuing our in-house and in-school provision throughout the coming year.

Bernadette Fisher

FAREWELL TO FRANK ...



It was with great sadness we learnt that our dear friend and former Director, Frank Maguire had died on 15th September 2018.

Frank was Director of **bccs** from 1998 to 2008 during which time he guided the charity through a period of significant change, including two changes of

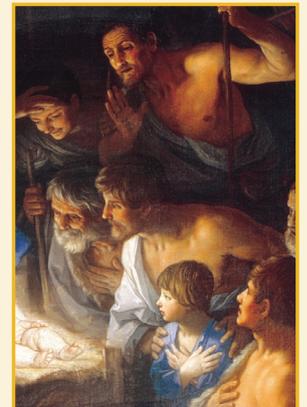
premises: one from Ongar Road, Brentwood to Fairview Convent, Queen's Road, Brentwood and then in 2004, a year when we also celebrated our 20th anniversary, to Childcare House, Rayleigh.

In 2014 in celebration of our 30th anniversary, Frank came together with former Directors and our founder Mgr. John Armitage, to enjoy an Anniversary Mass and Garden Party at Childcare House with Bishop Alan and many staff, supporters and clergy from the Brentwood Diocese.

We will always remember the work that Frank did for us as Director, then as a trustee and latterly as a loyal supporter of our charity.

May he rest in peace.

Advent Appeal



As we look forward to Christmas and the time we spend at home with our loved ones, it is important for us to remember that not everyone has the same experience and that for many children and families, Christmas is just like any other day – a day of hardship and struggle. It is a time that can be extremely difficult and a time when extra care, help and support is needed.

Throughout December we are asking people to donate to our Advent Appeal, so we can continue to give the gift of hope to the children and families who turn to **bccs** for help

We would like to thank you for all your ongoing support throughout this year and hope that you will continue to support the work we do during 2019.

UNDERSTANDING BULLYING

Anti-Bullying Week is an annual UK event held in the third week in November which aims to raise awareness of the bullying of children and young people, in schools and elsewhere, and to highlight ways of preventing and responding to it.

The first Anti-Bullying week was held in 2004 with the theme 'Stand up for us', giving guidance to primary and secondary schools on how to deal with bullying in schools. This year's theme was 'Choose Respect' which was selected following a consultation with over 800 children, teachers and members of the Anti-Bullying Alliance. It emerged that a top priority was showing that bullying is a behaviour choice, and that children and young people can set a positive example by opting to respect each other at school, in their homes and communities, and online.

Bullying can happen to anyone and can take on many different forms such as racist bullying because of skin colour, homophobic bullying based on sexual orientation, 'sizeist' bullying referring to body size, cyberbullying targeting young people online, or simply bullying because you are somehow seen as being 'different'. In our experience, young people who are bullied may show signs of having low self-esteem, anxiety, depression or eating disorders. They often experience a fear of revisiting the location of the bullying, which can pose a problem when that location is school.

At **bccs** we care very deeply about this subject and have launched our own Anti-Bullying workshop this term which we have been delivering principally to Year 8 children in many schools throughout Essex & East London. Our approach to bullying is slightly different to other organisations in that we try to see things from the point of view of the 'bully', to

try to empathise with them, to understand what makes them bully and in doing so, to lessen their power. We wanted to talk with young people about the issue of bullying but we wanted to do it in a different way. We consulted schools about the work they had previously done around bullying and it became clear that we wanted young people to connect with a bully from a different place - one of empowerment and empathy. The students work through a very real-life scenario and in doing so they leave our workshops having considered the idea that the bully is also a victim. Somehow this knowledge shifts the balance of power between the bully and those who are bullied.

We have had wholly positive feedback from the children attending our workshop and their teachers and we hope that as we deliver this to more schools in the year ahead, we can see a real understanding in the subject and a decrease in the numbers of children being bullied.

If you follow us on social media, you will have seen our Bullying Q&A throughout the week when we tried to show the relationship between the 'bully' and the 'victim', why the bully becomes a bully, whose side we are on, what happens to students' thinking once they learn to empathise. We have had lots of interaction with our tweets and posts and we see this as another way in which we can spread the word about the work we do.

Since September **bccs** workers have received 45 individual referrals relating to bullying and delivered 18 workshops to schools. We pride ourselves on being the ally of school staff and we remain committed to supporting schools to address bullying by continuing to offer support to pupils plus advice and support to school staff.

25 years supporting bccs

In 1993, two volunteers Irene and John Newell set up a Charity Shop in Highams Park, London called 'Base Rate' in order to raise much needed funds for Brentwood Catholic Children's Society. Subsequently the shop became known as 'Childcare' and has been a presence on Hale End Road for the past twenty-five years.

This year, our dear friends Irene and John have decided to retire from managing the shop and we would like to send them a huge 'thank you' from all the **bccs** team and trustees and on behalf of all the children they have helped over the years. They have been supported by a loyal band of volunteers who come out in all weathers to keep the shop open and running and we are so grateful to them all for the time, effort and energy they have given to us over the last twenty-five years.

Our best wishes go to John & Irene – two very special people who saw a need and responded to it. We wish you both a long and happy retirement.



Share a card this Christmas

Why not share a card this Christmas with friends, family and colleagues, save time, money, help the environment and **bccs**?

It's simple – instead of sending lots of cards to colleagues and friends, simply request your free A4 sized Christmas card which we will post to you along with a **bccs** collecting box.

Then display our Share-a-Card in a communal area, (this could be in your workplace, at a club or group, or at a school staff or classroom) and invite everyone to write their festive wish and make a donation in lieu of the money they would have spent sending individual cards.

Your donations can be sent to us to help support the vital work of **bccs**.
For your card and collecting box, please contact Alison on agolder@bccs.org.uk



Anniversary Charity Ball ...

Our Annual Charity Ball is our largest and most glamorous event of the year and with us celebrating our 35th anniversary next year, 2019 will be no exception!

We are still in the process of finalizing all the details but those of you who have attended previous events, will know that the evening will be one of fine dining, glamour and lots of fun with the occasional surprise!

Date - Saturday 9th March 2019
Venue - The Rayleigh Club, Hullbridge

Tickets are on sale now, costing £55 per person, which will include a drinks reception and three course dinner along with a full evening of entertainment. Guests will be seated on tables of 12, making tickets the perfect Christmas gift for a loved one or simply a great opportunity to get together with friends, family or colleagues, have a fantastic night out whilst at the same time raising vital funds for **bccs**!

To secure your tickets, discuss sponsorship packages or donate an auction prize please contact Julie on 01268 784544 / 07912277413 / jabbott@bccs.org.uk

Ladies' Christmas Luncheon

Friday 7th December 2018

We will be hosting our very popular Ladies' Luncheon on Friday 7th December 2018 at the Rayleigh Golf Club, Hullbridge.

Ladies will be treated to a delicious two-course Christmas luncheon with tea & coffee in the luxurious surroundings of a private room over-looking the golf course at this exclusive club.

Tickets cost £25.00 per person and with lunch being served at 12.30, there will still be time to pick up the children from school. To reserve your place, please contact Libby 01268 784544/ lphillips@bccs.org.uk

Raffle Tickets and Christmas Cards

Many of you will have already purchased our Christmas Cards or entered our Annual Prize Draw and we would like to thank you for your support. If, however, you have not yet chosen your Christmas cards please take a look at our selection and consider supporting **bccs** with your purchase this year.

Our Raffle Team, which takes on the work of selling tickets at events, in their parish and generally to family, friends and/or colleagues, is made up of very ordinary people doing extraordinary things. We are always in need of more people to join our raffle team - whether you can sell one book or a hundred - you can help us make a difference to the children and families whom we support.

Contact Libby on 01268 784544 / lphillips@bccs.org.uk



For further information on these events or help and support on hosting your own fund-raising event, please contact Julie Abbott on 01268 784 544 or jabbott@bccs.org.uk

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