



WANTED: A new home for the society

COVID-19 and its associated lockdowns have clearly had a dramatic impact on the charity sector – from increased demand for services in challenging operational circumstances, to dealing with concerns about reduced fundraising revenue. This has underlined the importance of effective decision-making by boards of trustees.

Yet whilst we have faced unprecedented challenges over the past eighteen months which have caused myriad difficulties and uncertainties, we have also had the time and opportunity to take a step back, reflect, learn from the experience and plan effectively for the future ahead.

From our humble beginnings 37 years ago in East London where we worked out of a cupboard with a handful of social workers, to where we are today, employing a fully qualified professional team made up of Counsellors, Social Workers, Psychotherapists, Play Therapists, Art Psychotherapists and Clinical Supervisors, we have continually grown and developed to meet the ever-increasing demand for our services. If we have learnt anything during this last year, it is that we need to continue to move forward, adapt and respond to the changing needs of our staff, the children and families in our care and the wider community we support. We know we can do this – remote working has given us a new flexibility, a

new sense of our identity and of the value and importance of our work.

As part of our ongoing plans to meet the 21st century needs of children's emotional health and wellbeing in our community, we have been assessing our office space to ensure it best meets our requirements. While Childcare House has been a suitable base for our work for many years, we now accept that we have outgrown these premises and feel it is incumbent on us to look ahead to the next 30 years, to plan for the needs of future generations who will require our specialist care. We also need to respond in the short term to a new post-Covid working environment which will allow our staff to work safely and securely.



And so, we now find ourselves on the cusp of an exciting new chapter in our history: the search for a new home for Brentwood Catholic Children's Society – one that will provide a base where we can develop and adapt to the changes we will inevitably face in the coming years, offering purpose-built counselling suites, supervision and training spaces and modern offices.

With this exciting new project in its early stages, we are reaching out to our supporters for help:

- **Do you know of any suitable premises that we might consider?**
- **Do you work in commercial property and might be able to assist us in our search?**
- **Are you the Trustee of a fund that deals in property?**

Providing services across the whole of the Brentwood Diocese means that we are looking to invest in premises of around 5000 sq ft in size that are centrally based. Our Director, Bernadette would be delighted to hear from you and would welcome any recommendation you may have. Please contact her at bfisher@bccc.org.uk

Meanwhile, we ask for your prayers that we may find suitable accommodation to call our 'forever home' and we thank you, as ever, for your continued support.

Christopher Tisi
Chair of Trustees

Relay 100 - Together we did it!



We were delighted to hear that our President, Bishop Alan would be willing to launch our Relay 100 community event at the start of July.

This community event was so vital to us as we emerged from lockdown and its aim was to connect with supporters in each of the parishes in the diocese, to remind our community that our work supporting children and families continues, and to ensure that these families know how to contact us.

Each participant agreed to walk, run or cycle one of one hundred separate 'legs' or routes linking up over 130 churches and mass centres in Essex and East London. With them, they carried a message for each parish in the diocese along with a new poster for display; this was the 'baton' of our Relay carried from church to church by individuals who came forward to help.

We are very grateful to everyone who helped us by taking part, donating, or sharing our message on social media. So far over £10,000 has been raised with more sponsorship still to be received.

A special word of thanks must go to our participants: having spent much of June phoning and emailing many of our nearest and dearest asking if they would be willing to take part in our Relay, we were relieved that the response was overwhelmingly positive and so by the start of July, the momentum began to build, and supporters began to plan their routes.

We were thrilled that following in the footsteps of Bishop Alan, Mgr John Armitage, our dear friend and **bccs** founder also walked a leg from Canning Town to Custom House in East London. Additionally, two of our former Directors, Frank McEvoy and Steven Webb completed legs around Shoeburyness and Chelmsford joining a Relay team made up of trustees, marathon runners in training, volunteers, families whom we have helped and members of staff. Our numbers were boosted further by members of the Knights of St Columba, the Catholic Women's League and Catenian groups.

Being part of a community unites us and allows us to feel part of something greater than ourselves. It gives us opportunities to connect with people, to reach for our goals, and makes us feel safe and secure. This sense of community is so important for us all particularly following the long periods of social isolation we have all endured. Thanks to the overwhelming support and encouragement we have received for Relay 100 we certainly feel more connected to our supporters and feel very lucky to be part of a very special community - the diocese of Brentwood.

Event photos can be viewed on our website at www.bccs.org.uk



Family Outreach Programme

Full circle, or evolution?

Some of you will be aware of our beginnings: **bccs** originally consisted of a team of social workers who supported vulnerable and deprived families. Our early work involved reactive, vital responses to families in need and, as such, had a social work feel to it. We have evolved however, and our work until now has transitioned from practical social work to more therapeutic interventions and family therapy. We have benefited from the spotlight on children's mental health and as such, have been able to recruit some brilliant therapists into our team to support children and young people.

We pride ourselves on being proactive in identifying changing needs and we recognised that the needs of families in this post-pandemic period have intensified. We know that therapy is not necessarily the right first step for every situation and so we began to re-evaluate the support we were offering, responding to a requirement to go back to our roots in special circumstances - providing a more practical, social work-based support in the family home. We are calling this new project our **Family Outreach Programme** and it is led by a member of our professional team who is also an experienced social worker. It took us a while to bring it to fruition, but we are incredibly proud and excited about this new project.

So how does it work? Using the specialist social work experience within our team, our Family Outreach Programme allows us to provide focused support and intervention for vulnerable families. Our support aims to strengthen and bolster the system around the child which in turn, allows the child to thrive.

We know that schools tend to bear the responsibility for children where the system of support around a child is failing. We also recognise that therapy isn't the most appropriate or beneficial provision for a child as a first step – how can we suggest therapy to a parent who cannot feed, clothe, or keep their child warm?

We know that extensive one-to-one therapy works for children and young people, but sometimes it is the system of support around a child which needs strengthening first. Therapeutically, our work tends to be one-to-one, but with a social work hat on, we can work in a more holistic way. Whilst we would typically hold the dynamics of a family in our thinking during therapy, when we work more practically, our presence in the home allows us to observe, monitor and



fully understand what is going on for a family and the impact this is having on a child.

We can, at times, be worn down by the generational patterns of harm we observe within a child or family. We can, at times, feel daunted in our efforts to sustainably repair this so that the next generation - the child in our care - can experience life differently and go on to parent differently as a result. That is where our work is so vital, and this new arm of our service allows us the freedom to put the right support in place.

“We pride ourselves on being proactive in identifying changing needs and we recognised that the needs of families in this post-pandemic period have intensified.”

COMMUNITY CORNER



Kirsten Attridge is a very special person to us. During the early months of lockdown last year, she decided to undertake the 2.6 Challenge to raise funds for charity with the aspiration of raising £260 and her challenge ended seven months later with a fundraising total of nearly £1600. What made her challenge even more amazing, was that during this time, Kirsten was undergoing treatment for cancer. She chose to fundraise for **bccs** because as a teacher in one of our partner schools she is very aware of how much our work is valued in schools but also because she wanted to focus on something positive during her treatment.

We are so proud of our community heroes who choose to go above and beyond for us. We wish Kirsten well and will be forever grateful for her support.

“So, that’s November over - last radiotherapy done and challenge completed. Seven marathons walked in seven months. Thank you from the bottom of my heart to everyone who has supported me. You’ve helped to raise nearly £1600 for a great cause and given me something positive to achieve during a tough period in my life. I am so grateful. “

Annual Prize Draw

Our Annual Prize Draw is always well supported, and we are grateful for every book of raffle tickets sold. Simply by taking part in our draw, you can help to support our work while giving yourself the chance of winning a **CASH PRIZE**:

1ST PRIZE £250
2ND PRIZE £100
3RD PRIZE £50

Tickets are £1 each - £5 for a book and any additional books can be requested by contacting Damian at ddillon@bccs.org.uk

Farewell to Irene

We were very sad to learn that our dear friend Irene Newell had died earlier this year.

Back in 1993, Irene and John Newell set up a Charity Shop in Highams Park London called ‘Base Rate’ to raise much needed funds for **bccs**. Subsequently the shop became known as ‘Childcare’ which had a presence on Hale End Road, East London until its closure in 2020.

Irene will always hold a very dear place in our **bccs** family, and our sincere condolences go to John and the family at this time of loss.

Our 2021 charity Christmas cards are now in stock!



All proceeds from the sale of our Christmas cards will help make a difference to the lives of the children and families we support. Choose from our great selection of Christmas cards – there is something to suit everyone.

With our office team working semi-remotely we would ask you to place your order as soon as possible. This will help enormously in allowing us the time to organise delivery in a safe and timely manner.

Simply return our Christmas card Order Form along with your card details or cheque (made payable to ‘**bccs**’) to ‘**bccs**’, Childcare House, Little Wheatley Chase, Rayleigh, SS6 9EH.

Our Order Form is also available to download directly from our website at www.bccs.org.uk/Christmas and payment can be made on-line using ‘Christmas cards’ as your reference: Brentwood Catholic Childrens Society Account No: 31094130 Sort Code: 40-13-22

Repositories: If you run a repository shop and would like further information about stocking our cards, please contact Libby at lphillips@bccs.org.uk



For further information on these events or help and support on hosting your own fundraising event, please contact Julie Abbott on 01268 784544 or jabbott@bccs.org.uk

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