



## Hope From Uncertainty

Easter and Christmas are the high points of the church's year. The Christmas story, on the face of it, is much more appealing than the Easter story. Suffering and death are harder to contemplate than a birth and yet we can't brush these things aside. The Easter message is however one of joy and hope for all people, because we know that suffering and death do not have the final word.



As we come out of the pandemic – and pray God, this is the direction we are moving in – there is a lot of uncertainty. Few people have come out of this period entirely unscathed. For children and young people, the pandemic represents a significant proportion of their life so far; some of them hardly remember what life before Covid was like. Families have struggled in greater number than ever with bereavement, job losses, relationship breakdown, and rising costs of living. Children have missed out not only on time in the classroom, but also on opportunities to form friendships, and the experiences and milestones that are an important part of growing up. The professionals at **bccc** have risen admirably to the challenge of meeting the needs of children and young people in these testing times. Whatever the difficulties they are facing, young people do not need to do so alone. Of course, this work can only be done thanks to the generosity of our supporters and the hard work and creativity of our fundraising team, who have also faced a difficult two years.

Tempting though it is to think in terms of fixing problems, we know that this is not always possible, or necessarily the right approach. Christ's decisive victory over the grave is the very opposite of waving a magic wand to fix humanity's problems. Christ enters into our suffering, our mortality, our broken relationships, in order to bring about healing and reconciliation. The new life he offers is not merely more of the same, but a life that is utterly transformed, a life in which we are truly free to be who we are meant to be, as God's beloved children. A life filled with light and joy. Our faith teaches us that the only proper response to someone who is suffering is to walk with them, to listen, to show God's love in whatever way we can, but certainly not avert our gaze or close our ears because the messiness of other peoples' lives makes us uncomfortable. Our Lord's resurrection does not take away from the reality of his suffering; the nail marks and spear wound are still present in his glorified risen body. But we also understand, in the light of Easter, that the pain and suffering which are a very real part of our lives now will not last for ever. He does all this, suffering with and for us, out of love for us – a deep love for each and every single one of us. The most important work **bccc** does is helping every child we work with to know that they are infinitely precious, of immeasurable value, and loved beyond words.

Please continue to keep the work of **bccc**, our staff, and above all the children who need us, in your prayers, and please think about how you might be able to support this work in other ways.

**Fr Matthew Bemand-Qureshi**  
**bccc** Trustee and Diocesan Chaplain  
for Marriage & Family Life

## The Director Writes

With the ease in restrictions and the nationwide celebration of Children's Mental Health Week in February, it was lovely for me to once again be a physical presence in some of our schools.

The theme of Children's Mental Health Week 2022 was 'Growing Together' and gave us the opportunity to deliver an assembly around this theme in schools. I talked to children about worries, big feelings, emotional growth and the things we need from ourselves and from the adults around us to promote happiness and resilience, and what they can do if they don't feel okay. I was warmly received by school staff and children who shared their ideas so enthusiastically and positively.

Of course, in our world every week is Children's Mental Health Week, and this is particularly relevant as we watch the horrific events unfold in the Ukraine. Whilst we are geographically far away, many in our schools and communities are directly affected and have families or roots in the region. Our schools' team as always is working collaboratively with school staff and other agencies to support families and children affected.

During this, the season of Lent, we must unite in prayer and hope for an ending to the suffering in the Ukraine.

**Bernadette Fisher**

## Welcome to our new trustees

We know how important it is to look ahead and plan for our charity's future and having a diverse, engaged board of trustees to guide and inform our decision-making is a key element of our succession planning. This time last year we began a recruitment drive to appoint some new members to our Board and this month, we are delighted to welcome six new trustees to our **bccs** family.

Over the coming year, we look forward to working alongside them, to making good use of their expertise and wisdom on their individual sub-committees and will be inviting them to introduce themselves to you. In this edition, Beth and Katharine - who will be joining the Marketing and Fundraising Sub-Committee - tell us about themselves, and why they have chosen to take up this important role with us:



Beth Warren

Hello! I'm Beth and I am currently Senior Parish Engagement Officer for the charity 'Million Minutes'.

Working with and advocating for young people is my passion and **bccs** is a phenomenal organisation that shares this passion. Mental health is such an important issue for everyone, but for young people, care and consideration for personal mental health is hugely vital.

I have seen first-hand the amazing impact that **bccs** has in our community and I am honoured to become a trustee to help continue and further this work.

I'm Katharine, and I run my own business, where I provide First Aid for Mental Health training courses to individuals and groups in order to reduce stigma and increase awareness around mental health conditions and how to support people.

I wanted to become a Trustee for **bccs** in order to develop my charity experience further and to make a difference to the teams providing vital support to young people around the diocese and to incorporate my Catholic faith and commitment to supporting wellbeing.

I am really looking forward to getting involved!



Katharine McKnight

# Holding the child at our centre

*The therapy we deliver has many different forms, sometimes we work with the child on their own, sometimes with the parent or carer, and at other times with the parent and child together. Occasionally, it can feel unusual if we recommend to a school that we would like to firstly work with the parent or carer when it is clear that the child or young person is having issues; we would like to explain why we do this.*

## **Parental Therapy**

We know when parental therapy will be effective when a parent can't explain to us, for example, why they become so angry, distressed, or frustrated in their interactions with their child. We listen for their language: they tell us that they're doing their best, that they are desperate to interact with their child differently but become overwhelmed in the moments of stress. Our training enables us to understand that in these cases, the distress of the parent comes from their own childhood experiences and not from within their role as a parent.

Parental therapy is not a parenting course, neither is it a "how-to". We think of it more as a specialist intervention rather than a direct therapy. During these interventions, a therapist must be able to hold the child at the centre of their thinking whilst they support a parent to connect with their own childhood experiences – and this is when the healing starts.



## **Meet Michael**

When we worked with his parents, Michael was 8. He seemed angry, uncontrolled, ruling the roost at home, and then at other times, withdrawn, distressed, and wanting to isolate himself from others. Our assessment showed us that Michael's mother was berating herself, distancing herself from Michael, believing that she didn't love him and that he hated her.

We understood that Michael's mother found it difficult to connect with him and that Michael was suffering as a consequence. He thought that he was damaging his mother, that he was unlovable, and that at any moment she would disappear.

We worked firstly with Michael's mother - she needed our understanding, our care and our experience to name the guilt and shame she felt about her supposed feelings towards her son. She learned that her feelings were grounded in her own childhood experiences and were not about Michael and this understanding began to free her from her intense guilt. Equally, over time, Michael was freed from experiencing his mother as a confusing mixture, absent, angry and unavailable.

Michael benefitted from our work as we held him at the centre of it, whilst supporting his mum to understand which of her childhood "ghosts" were present within her role as mother. This is always painful work for a parent, who needs time, care and complete non-judgment from us. They need our language and to trust that we can think about their child as being "not okay" so that they can be free to think about how *they* are "not okay" first.

Once a parent is able to work through some of their parental distress, we are then able to support them with strategies: the all-important "how-tos" when addressing conflict with their child. We can empower them to interact with their child from a parental place, rather than a place of fear or avoidance. It enables parents to put boundaries in place where they didn't exist; to 'see' their child free from any of their own pain, and to enjoy their time with their child. The benefits of this work to any child are immense and entirely sustainable.

## **Why your help is vital to our work**

Once we have supported a parent to understand the significance of their role, we will use our specialist trained therapists to engage a parent and their child in therapy together. This is known as Dyadic Therapy and is a precious, therapeutic time where we work with a parent and their child at the same time with the intention to nurture, repair and build upon their relationship. It is skilled and valuable work, and we rely on your contributions to enable us to deliver these incredibly important specialist interventions; thank you for all you continue to do to help us in our endeavours.

# COMMUNITY CORNER

## Relay 100 Rides Again



RELAY  
100

100 PEOPLE  
100+ CHURCHES  
450 MILES  
WALK, RUN, CYCLE

We are delighted to be holding our diocesan-wide sponsored walks again this year during the months of May and June in line with our original walks' calendar, and are looking for willing volunteers to walk, run or cycle a route for us. The 100 'legs' or routes around Essex and East London are of varying distances and can be undertaken in family, friendship, parish or community groups.

If you would like to be part of our Relay team this year, please email: Damian - [ddillon@bccs.org.uk](mailto:ddillon@bccs.org.uk)

We are on a mission to make the event bigger and better and with your help we hope we can be even more successful than last year.

## Our January Man

We are so grateful to our supporter Gavin who undertook a 31-day challenge for us in January. Gavin started the New Year by committing to run 10k a day for us while having to deal with an Achilles injury and some pretty nasty weather throughout the month. By the end of the month Gavin had not only completed 310k but had raised almost £900 to help us support children and young people in our community - that's an amazing start to the year for us!

Gavin told us: 'It has been extremely tough and had I not decided to support a charity, I definitely would have given up. So happy we are able to help such a good cause.'

If you have been inspired by Gavin and would like to challenge yourself for us (remember – you don't have to do a physical challenge - we love to hear about bake, jumble and boot sales too!) please email us with your idea to [headoffice@bccs.org.uk](mailto:headoffice@bccs.org.uk)



## Return of the Ascot Ladies' Luncheon!

After a two-year break, we are delighted to be hosting our Ascot Ladies' Luncheon again on **Friday 17th June 2022, 12pm** at the Rayleigh Golf & Country Club, Hullbridge. We look forward to seeing some old friends at our ever-popular luncheon once again and to welcoming some new guests who are joining us this year for the first time. As always, ladies are encouraged to dust off their best hats or fascinators, join in with our fun racing sweepstake and enter the spirit of a day at the races!

Tickets cost £28 per person for a delicious two-course luncheon with tea and coffee, served in the luxurious surroundings of a private room overlooking the golf course at this exclusive club. Why not join us this year? We would love to have you with us!

Email Libby ([lphillips@bccs.org.uk](mailto:lphillips@bccs.org.uk)) to reserve your tickets and we look forward to seeing you in June.

## Lenten Appeal



Lent is a time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving and we have always been fortunate to receive generous donations and prayers from our community during this period.

If you are giving up something for Lent, please transform it into lasting change by donating the money you save to ensure we can continue to provide vital mental health support to those who need us most.

Simply complete the enclosed donation card and return to us or if you would prefer to donate using your on-line banking, you can make a direct transfer to our bank account using the code **Lent 2022** as a reference. Thank you.

**Account Name:** Brentwood Catholic Childrens Society  
**Account Number:** 31094130  
**Sort Code:** 40 13 22



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](mailto:jabbott@bccs.org.uk)

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