



Under the shadow of His wing



“Cover my defenceless head with the shadow of thy wing” wrote Charles Wesley over 250 years ago. How apposite those words are in describing the mission of BCCS today.

Children and young people face enormous challenges and pressures, many of them potentially destructive of young lives. So often they are defenceless, fearing they are alone in trying to cope. I like to think of BCCS as bringing them under the protective shadow of the Lord's mighty wing.

By doing so we inject fresh hope and renewed purpose into their lives, something perfectly aligned with the Easter message. The Easter services take us from the darkness of the crucifixion to the new light of the resurrection. It may be an easy journey for us sitting in church but for the children and young people BCCS reaches out to, it is the most difficult journey of their young lives.

It is a journey they should never feel they have to undertake alone.

So many times during my nine years as a trustee of BCCS, when I had the privilege of visiting parishes around the diocese, people wanted to share their gratitude for the work of BCCS, often illustrating it with their own experiences as a parent, grandparent, or occasionally, a person who had reached out to BCCS for help. Of course, the parish visits are not about eliciting gratitude but those stories help underline why BCCS is needed more than ever.

The numbers turning to the charity for help are constantly increasing as the range of problems that render them vulnerable and defenceless seem to increase almost daily. Often at the end of Masses I had spoken at people commented that they had no idea of the scale and breadth of the work undertaken by BCCS.

The superb counselling and support staff at BCCS are its frontline and they are well placed to offer exactly the right help when and where it is needed. They stay working with children and their families for as long as that help is required, and sometimes that can be years. Easter may be over in a matter of days for us but for many of those struggling to cope with bullying, poverty, lack of self-worth or their perceived failure to live up to the false images of perfection projected at them by social media, that journey from darkness and despair to light and hope can take years.

There is so much we can all do to support BCCS. You could consider becoming a trustee to help shape and guide the charity's work. Financial support is crucial to ensure BCCS is always able to help the growing numbers who turn to us for help, and the events, sponsored activities, Christmas cards and raffles all contribute vital funds.

Most of all we can all play our part in making sure that no child or young person is left thinking they have no-one to turn to when they need help. Through our parishes and schools we must ensure that the comfort to be found in the shadow of the Lord's protective wing is extended wherever it is needed.

David Worsfold

We are most grateful to David for this lovely article and for his help and support over the last nine years. He has served as a trustee for BCCS from 2013 until autumn 2022 and was Chair of the Marketing & Fundraising Committee between 2016 and 2022.

The Director Writes - A warm welcome to our new home

Back in November, we were delighted to welcome our President, Bishop Alan to officially open and bless our new offices. He was joined by members of the clergy, trustees and staff, former directors and benefactors including representatives from the Jeanne Marie Gunn trust whose very generous gift made our move to new premises possible. There was a lovely atmosphere of joy and celebration as our guests toured the building and were able to see our new therapy rooms and facilities.



In January we were pleased to welcome our volunteers for a coffee morning and tour; we all enjoyed our get-together and catching up on their news. These ladies have been helping us for many years with administrative tasks and assisting at events and we look forward to using their services again during the course of the year.

Following this, we opened our doors to over twenty headteachers and school staff to a 'School Taster Day' – a chance to sample some free workshops and enjoy a tour of our therapy rooms and training area. It was a perfect opportunity to share expertise, and we were

pleased to hear what our teachers thought of our new premises and workshops.

Supporters' Saturday followed quickly on the heels of the School Taster Day and was a chance for some of our long-term supporters to visit. Many of these friends have known us since the society began in 1984 and have been linked to us in some way by organising community walks and events, fundraising or making regular donations to support our work. It was a lovely chance to see our nearest and dearest again, put names to faces and to thank everyone in person for all they continue to do for BCCS.

The families visiting our new premises for the first time are so very impressed by our facilities and comment on how 'homely' and 'welcoming' our new rooms feel. With spring just around the corner, we look forward to being able to use our garden therapy room and for children and staff to be able to just sit and be still in our little green space. We are thankful every day for our good fortune.

As we begin a further recruitment drive for trustees to join our Board, I would like to invite you to contact me if you think you could be of service to us. Please visit www.bccs.org.uk/who-we-are/our-trustees/ for more details.

Wishing you all a very happy Easter and thanking you for your continued support.

Bernadette Fisher

Lent 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 you can donate directly from our website using the reference 'Lent'. Simply visit www.bccs.org.uk and click the blue DONATE box at the top of the page.

If you prefer to donate using your on-line banking, you can make a direct transfer to our bank account using the reference 'Lent'. Thank you in advance for your support.

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

Thank You

'The Priests' Charity Concert



Hot off the press! We have just received confirmation that 'The Priests' have agreed to host a summer concert for us at Brentwood Cathedral on **Friday 30th of June at 7.30pm.**

'The Priests' are a classical musical trio, made up of three Roman Catholic priests from the Diocese of Down and Connor, N. Ireland: brothers Fr. Eugene and Fr. Martin O'Hagan and Fr. David Delargy. The trio have been singing together since they were students at St MacNissi's College, County Antrim in the 1970s.

We are absolutely delighted that they have agreed to perform this second concert for us, the first time they visited Brentwood Diocese was in 2019 to perform for our 35th anniversary. They were overwhelmed by the warm welcome they received and tell us they are looking forward to performing for us once again.

As before, tickets will be available via the Eventbrite website:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/528414691567>

For all information regarding the event, please visit our webpage:

www.bccs.org.uk/get-involved/events/

Professional Update

As I sit to write for our newsletter, I see that we have over 700 cases open – that is 700 young people we are supporting through difficult times; it has been a busy term so far. In addition our Child and Family Counselling Service is working at capacity with children and young people being supported therapeutically each week in our on-site therapy rooms. The issues we are seeing range from low self-esteem, dysfunction at home, self-harm, anxiety, and school related behaviour issues.

Our work in schools continues to be in high demand with many schools needing to increase their reliance on our services and whilst we are glad to be able to support, we are saddened that the need is there within children and young people. Schools are turning to us to help support issues they are dealing with and we never tire of doing this. Some of the workshops which are most in demand are as follows:

Student wellbeing package - This package allows us to support students to understand things like the impact on them of their parent/carers' mental health, what it is like to be the person your friends turn to when sharing their

problems and the burden this can feel, for example.

Process group work - This kind of work is on the increase for us as a service. Whilst we continue with our one-to-one work with a lot of children and young people, group work with identified common themes is forming a big part of our daily work.

Training in schools - We have been running a series of 'Tune into your teen' workshops to our secondary schools. Parents and carers have absorbed all we are saying, and the feedback has been outstanding. We will continue to work on material to deliver directly to parents as their understanding as to their child/young person's mental health is a huge part of the process of reparation.

Our work is only possible because of the unstinting support we receive from our supporters and friends in the community and for this we are truly grateful.

Catherine Munns
Head of School Services & Clinical Development

COMMUNITY CORNER



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 and are looking for willing volunteers to walk, run or cycle a route for us.

Each of the 100 'legs' or routes around Essex and East London are of various distances and can be undertaken in family, friendship, parish or community groups.

If you would like to take part in Relay 100 this year or organise a community-based event to raise funds for us, we would love to hear from you; please email Damian at ddillon@bccs.org.uk.

Read more on our website www.bccs.org.uk and look for our 'Relay 100' tab under Get Involved/Events.



Fr Rick's birthday fundraiser

We are so grateful to Fr Rick of St Teresa's parish, Lexden who set up a special birthday fundraiser for BCCS and pledged to shave off his beard to raise funds to support our work. His generous donors went above and beyond and raised a fantastic sum of £2100! Our thanks to Fr Rick for choosing us as his birthday charity and to everyone who got behind his fundraising in such a good-humoured way.

Scarlett – our youngest fundraiser



Just before Christmas, we were delighted to welcome Scarlett and her mum to our office. Scarlett at just 10 years old, is our youngest fundraiser and has been making and selling bracelets at local craft fairs and among friends and family and donating a percentage of her earnings to BCCS.

We love to hear stories about children helping other children and were so pleased to receive this lovely donation, to meet Scarlett in person and hear how she set up her little business.

She is pictured here beside our Therapy Tree which was painted by our Art Therapist Claire. This is used by our young people to share their thoughts and feelings.

Ascot Ladies' Lunch

Friday 23rd June 2023
Rayleigh Golf & Country Club

We look forward to seeing some old friends at our ever-popular luncheon once again and to welcoming some new guests who we hope will join us this year for this first time. We are asking ladies to arrive at 12pm for a 12.30 lunch service so there will be plenty of time to enjoy lunch and take part in our fun racing sweepstake before the school-run.

Tickets cost **£30** per person for a delicious two-course luncheon with tea and coffee and as always, ladies are encouraged to dust off their best hats or fascinators and enter into the spirit of a day at the races!

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

French night for BCCS

In February, our dear supporter Dominic Argent-Hall along with members of the St Joseph's Club Upminster, held a French night to help increase awareness of our work and to raise funds for us. The evening was a great success with 60 people attending and enjoying a delicious three course French-themed meal. We are very grateful to everyone for their support.

