

Cyrenians

Working together to find lasting solutions.



Winter 07/08

“Just passing
Kangaroo Island”

Mark, cyclist page 4

“Tenancy Support has
helped me become
the person I am
today”

Kelly, service user page 5

“I enjoy volunteering.
I’ve had my ups and
downs, but everybody
has them.”

James, volunteer page 5

“He quickly saw that
he had fallen back
into a lifestyle he
had worked hard to
leave behind”

Paul, service user page 7

Give Me a Voice

“I had it all” said Donald, “A home, family, a job, holidays....but I also had the drink”. His drinking turned in to an addiction and had a destructive effect on his life. “I lost my marriage, my job and my self respect. I nearly lost my life.”

After six months in a rehabilitation unit, he was still at a low point in his life. He started coming to Cooking at Home Classes at the Cyrenians Good Food Depot. At the end of the class, volunteers would come in and share a meal. “I got more and more inquisitive about what was going on in the depot. Up until that point I thought people who volunteered were just losers and couldn’t get a real job.”

Donald decided to become a volunteer himself. “I know I am helping people in a desperate situation – a situation that I could easily still be in. I have a purpose in life.”

Donald is now in his own tenancy and continues to make a major contribution to the work of the Cyrenians Good Food Programme. He has also rebuilt good relationships with his family.

BBC Radio Scotland featured Donald’s story in their programme “Give Me a Voice” during November.

If you missed the broadcast, you can listen online on the BBC website www.bbc.co.uk or by visiting the Latest News page at www.cyrenians.org.uk

We are currently looking for volunteers from all walks of life to help out in the depot, or to drive the FareShare van. If you are interested please contact Carol-Anne Alcorn on (0131) 554 3900 or carol-anne@cyrenians.org.uk





Film Launch

Cyrenians Farm unveiled a new film "Sowing Dreams" during an event ("Street Dreams") in the Glasgow Film Theatre on 8th December. The 11 minute clip is a candid look at the residential care community, including a residents story; a look at our organic farm and how we are developing it into a social enterprise; and the corporate team challenge days. The film was made by the Media Co-op and funded by Communities Scotland. To watch it, go to our website www.cyrenians.org.uk.

Edinburgh Marathon

Trying to think of a New Years resolution? Why not resolve to do more exercise?! Next year will be Cyrenians 40th Anniversary, one of the events we are using to mark it is the Edinburgh Marathon, which includes a relay, on Sunday 25th May. By joining us you can help us fundraise and raise the profile of our work. Last year we had five teams and two runners who raised over £3000; we'd like to improve on that for 2008. Please email phil@cyrenians.org.uk for full details or call 0131 475 2356

Hair Creations

Congratulations to one of our People with Potential stars, Carol Willson, who recently presented her business plan to the Princes Scottish Youth Business Trust Panel. As a result, Carol was given a start up award and has launched her new mobile hair-dressing service, A2Z Hair Creations; contact numbers (0131) 313 2932 or 07719455782



Acheivement Award

Sami fled his homeland scared for his safety in 2004. After being granted leave to remain in the UK and coming to Edinburgh, he found himself on the homeless scene.

After being accepted into Cyrenians City Community in early 2005, Sami engaged with our People With Potential service. With our help, he enrolled on an access course in the Built Environment department at Telford College. Using SmartMove, our rent deposit guarantee scheme, Sami soon moved into his own flat.

In November of this year he was presented with his HND Architectural Technology Achievement Award (pictured above with Chris Hewitt, his People with Potential worker).

His college studies have greatly benefitted from a voluntary work experience placement with a well-known firm of Edinburgh architects, Simpson & Brown.

His long-term goal is to return to Ethiopia as a fully qualified architect, and to work for Altad, a firm of architects there. He said to Chris, "I remember we wrote my dream of working for Altad on a piece of paper. I still have it. You have helped me a lot and I hope one day to realise my dream."



Around the World Challenge

Mark Beaumont, who is 25 and lives in Edinburgh, set out from Paris on the 5th of August 2007 to cycle the *18,000 miles* round the world for the Guinness World Record. His target is to do this remarkable feat in just seven months to break the existing record.

At the moment he is cycling in the cool of the night along the south coast of Australia just passing the aptly named Kangaroo Island (as it's too hot to cycle in the day time!) With only New Zealand, right across the USA then Portugal and back through France to go he is well over the half way mark and on target to beat the record.

This epic bike ride is of interest to Cyrenians Good Food in Tackling Homelessness Programme as Mark, through his sponsorship by Artemis "the profit hunters" in Edinburgh, is raising money for a number of charities including the Good Food Programme.

We would urge you to support Mark. Visit his website at www.pedallingaround.com/start/ where you can track his progress via satellite tracking as well as make a donation. You can even send him an email to encourage him! The BBC are creating a documentary of this World Cycle Challenge so watch out for that in 2008.

As Christmas approaches please do tell your friends and family about Mark's Challenge and ask them to support him and Cyrenians Good Food in Tackling Homelessness Programme.

A Life Changing Experience

I have always had an interest in the issue of homelessness and was inspired by a book called 'Stuart a Life Backwards' to get involved in the voluntary sector. I found out about the Cyrenians through an advert in the Big Issue and decided to apply to become a volunteer as I thought it would be an excellent experience. During the six months I spent in the Cyrenians farm and city communities I learned more than I could possibly have imagined.

Community life as a volunteer requires you to be aware of the needs of others and yourself. It requires good judgment, self-belief, belief in others, compassion, impartiality, understanding, patience, fairness, empathy, emotional resilience, the need to be able to speak clearly and in turn, the need to LISTEN and so much more. I came away feeling indebted to all those that I shared the experience with because they gave me a lifetime of memories and experiences in six months. It is these memories and experiences that have equipped me for life and for a valuable career in social care where I will continue to apply the Cyrenians values to everything I do.

Michael Opitz

www.cyrenians.org.uk





Kelly was living in a homeless hostel following a disagreement with her father. She first engaged with Cyrenians when she moved into one of our managed flats just over two years ago. Six months ago, she started the Outside In award.*

Her studies have equipped her with the knowledge and skills to be able to address the issues in her life and focus on her long term goals. She has managed to clear all her debts, goes to the gym regularly and successfully bid for a council flat of her own.

Outside In

Accessing employment, training and education is more difficult if you have no permanent address or if your self-confidence has been knocked.

Outside In is a nationwide project that Cyrenians has been piloting for the past year. The aim is to re-engage homeless people and those affected by homelessness, in learning. It is accredited by Stevenson College, although the majority of the work is assessed by the support worker.

Innovative approaches to course work ensure that no-one need be excluded by learning difficulties or literacy issues. The evidence needed to achieve each module can be hugely varied and doesn't always have to be written work.

Kelly is adjusting brilliantly to having her own tenancy, she has already finished decorating one of her rooms and is planning how she wants the other rooms to look. She says "Tenancy support has helped me become the person I am today, which is a more confident, happier and stable person. I have enjoyed doing Outside In; it is about dealing with everyday life, and it has helped me to really focus on things that I needed to deal with"

*name has been changed

For more information about Outside In or Tenancy Support, contact Kathy Hoyle on 0131 475 2439, or kathy@cyrenians.org.uk

Congratulations to James Harris (pictured left) who became the first person to complete the **Outside In** course.

James became homeless following relationship breakdowns with his family. He moved into Cyrenians City community before getting his own flat; but found himself homeless again after difficulties with his neighbours.

James started to volunteer at the Good Food depot and, when he

was offered a council flat, started to work with Kathy Hoyle, our Tenancy Support worker (also pictured). He has been in his flat for over two years now and remains a volunteer at the depot.

"I still enjoy volunteering. I've had my ups and downs, but everybody has them. When I first started my confidence was low, I was hardly talking and never had a smile on my face, but now I have got great confidence and skills which give me a boost."

Flatmates - Living Together

Most people have some experience of living in shared housing and know how hard it is and how good it can be. Most of us will have happy memories and horror stories to share. The place of shared living as a normal rite of passage for people in their life journey is illustrated in popular culture - The Young Ones, Friends, This Life... It provides a soap opera in which we find something of our own character, a comic diversion from loneliness and boredom and an economic solution to meeting high living costs and the need for disposable income.

Things are different for the young people who Cyrenians have been offering this service to. Firstly, prospective tenants have got no choice but to share. They are being forced into sharing by a benefit rule that only permits rent for welfare claimants to be paid on the cost of a single room in a shared flat. This only applies to people under 25 and those seeking housing in the private rented sector. Cyrenians run rent deposit guarantee schemes in West Lothian and Edinburgh – giving people at risk of homelessness and without financial means the opportunity to access private rented flats. All under 25's needing this service have the additional hurdle of finding someone to share with.

The second big difference for Flatmates target client group is that there is no safety net. When things go wrong there is no Mum to run to, no 'home' to go home to, no friends in a position to put you up until things get sorted. Most Flatmates are one step away from homelessness.

Flatmates is a simple idea developed out of this real need. It helps individuals find suitable people to share with and helps them to anticipate the sorts of situations and 'sharing' challenges they will face and agree in advance strategies for dealing with them.



To date, we have set up and supported 28 people in West Lothian, where the scheme is currently being run. On occasions when one flatmate moves out, we look to our current referrals list to identify a suitable sharer for the remaining tenant.

In the beginning there was a resistance from landlords about the flatmates scheme as they viewed young people as difficult tenants. Cyrenians has used its in-house bi-yearly Landlords Forum to highlight the project and increase the pool of landlords willing to work with the project. With nearly 80% of those housed so far having sustained their accommodation, landlords are increasingly coming round to the idea of letting to this client group.

For further information or to make a referral, contact Julie Crawford, Flatmates Worker, 01506 204775, julie@cyrenians.org.uk



Tackling Addiction

Coping with addictions can itself be a full time battle. There are a myriad of reasons that someone might turn to drugs or alcohol in the first place, for the majority they are a way of escaping from problems in life that many of us can only imagine.

Moving on from an addiction and back into the community is often a long, lonely journey with many obstacles to be overcome on the way. Kevin Callaghan works for Cyrenians in West Lothian. His role is to support individuals over the age of 16 who want to address their drug use and who's housing is at risk. Becoming homeless would be another problem for them to deal with and those not strong enough could easily return to drugs as a coping method

Over the last year he has worked with 30 clients, all managing to keep their homes while building a life away from drugs; 90% significantly reduced their drug usage. The service provides one-to-one sessions; advice to encourage individuals to sustain contact with drug treatment and rehabilitation services; support in retaining accommodation and diversionary activities such as access to health programmes. All these encourage well-being, increase self-confidence and enhance social skills.

Several clients also participated in and completed a personal development plan (pictured left with their certificates)

For further information or to make a referral, contact Kevin Callaghan on 01506 204765, kevin@cyrenians.org.uk

Thank you to Lloyds TSB Foundation and the Robertson Trust for funding this project.

Paul has a long history of substance misuse, criminal behaviour and homelessness and was referred to West Lothian Council's Criminal Justice team for consideration for a DTTO (Drug treatment testing order). Once accepted onto this year long order, Paul began this difficult and intensive alternative to prison with the aim of ending his 12 year addiction to heroin and its associated lifestyle.*

After 8 months of the order, Paul was referred to the Cyrenians Drugs Outreach Project. By this time he was stable on a methadone prescription, had moved out of homeless accommodation and been allocated his own tenancy, but was finding things difficult. The Drugs Outreach Project came in and supported Paul with his tenancy, liaising with the local authority landlord and helping set up payment options with his bills and debts.

Paul successfully completed his DTTO, and then attended various activities and personal development programmes to help boost his confidence and self esteem. This included a 4 day residential at Wiston Lodge where he completed the Breakthrough to Excellence certificate.

A short time after, Paul had a small relapse following rumours that he was wanted on an outstanding issue prior to him starting his DTTO. Paul was fearful of losing his tenancy and the possibility of going back to prison, so reverted to his old coping habit - using drugs. He quickly saw that he had fallen back into a lifestyle he had worked hard to leave behind and, with the support of the Drugs Outreach Worker, made sure that he re-entered a drug treatment programme. He also found out that there was no truth to the rumours and began looking forward instead of backwards. Paul is now almost at his end of support with the Drugs Outreach Project. He's started an introductory part-time course at college with a view to attending full time in the future.

*name has been changed



Christmas eCards

Thank you to everyone who supported the Cyrenians Christmas eCards. This has been the first year we have tried them and, on the whole, they have been a success. The feedback we have received will help us improve the process for next year.

Thank you to Citi for providing a large team of workers to redecorate four rooms in our volunteer flat. The flat is where our long term residential volunteers go when they have some time off. Over the years the flat had become a bit dirty and cluttered, but thanks to the hard work and enthusiasm from Citi, it is now enjoying a new lease of life.

We would also like to thank Richmond Homes for upgrading the bathroom earlier in the year and Edinburgh Besom for decorating one of our supported flats.

The money raised will go towards our **Good Food programme**; distributing food to over 40 homeless agencies throughout Edinburgh and West Lothian. The programme also provides cookery classes and volunteering opportunities.

The cards can still be viewed on our website www.cyrenians.org.uk

How You Can Help

If you would like to make a donation to the work of Cyrenians, please complete and return the form below.

I enclose a donation of £_____ (cheques payable to Edinburgh Cyrenians)

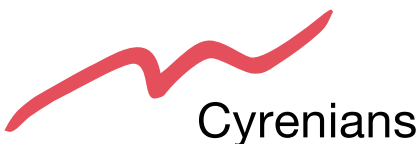
Name: _____

Address: _____

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I hereby declare that I am a UK taxpayer and would like Edinburgh Cyrenians to reclaim tax on my donation

Signed: _____ Date: _____



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