



connect

Spring Newsletter 09



The Connection
at St Martin-in-the-Fields

colin's update



A Measured Approach

No-one is immune from the current economic climate. At first sight, it would seem that the group least affected by the recession are the homeless people. One could say that people with no homes and no jobs have nothing to lose. That while the rest of society agonises about the loss of monetary value in terms of property prices, savings and income, for those on the streets life cannot get any worse.

However, things are not that simple. Our task is to get people off the streets and into accommodation and employment where possible. If there are no jobs people cannot move out of hostels to support themselves. If there are no vacancies in hostels, then people stay on the streets. So while people with nothing may have nothing to lose, we still have an uphill struggle to keep alive the hope that one day things will be different. It is a struggle as donations from companies, trusts and individuals are at risk, and funding from Government becomes even more competitive.

So how do we and can we respond to the current climate to ensure we continue to meet the needs of the homeless people of today and tomorrow?

Instead of relying on hostels which are already full to capacity, we can use the private rented sector where rents are falling and vacancies increasing. In terms of jobs we can look at our own ability to create work and training – the central London economy is still reasonably buoyant.

In terms of new arrivals we can step up our preventative role, intervening as early as possible to ensure that people who arrive today do not become the rough sleepers of tomorrow.

We can use our Night Centre in an emergency to ensure that the most vulnerable and chaotic rough sleepers get vital, life-saving support. Last winter our Night Centre, designed to look after 40 people a night, was taking in over 90 individuals each night throughout the exceptionally cold weather.

Finally, by ensuring that every penny we raise is spent effectively, we are convinced that donations can be maintained, even in a recession. We do, however, need to find more ways to safeguard our future. You will therefore find enclosed a leaflet about how you can make a very special and lasting impact on our work by leaving a gift in your Will.

Leaving a gift of this kind is obviously a decision not to be taken lightly, but we hope that, even in these testing times, we will be able to count on your support to help those affected by homelessness.

Colin Glover
Chief Executive

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Glover', enclosed within a hand-drawn oval shape.



Street outreach

Our Outreach Team works with people who sleep rough in the city of Westminster.

The team provides an immediate response to rough sleepers through outreach on the streets, by making referrals to our Day and Night Centre for services and advice, and by providing ongoing case work with existing clients. By getting to know rough sleepers, the team are able to identify their needs and help them access the services they need, when they need them, to help them ultimately move off the streets. This is often long-term work as many rough sleepers have been on the streets for years.

Outreach workers cover areas which include rough sleeping 'hotspots', where people are sex working and places where newly homeless people tend to end up. When necessary we can intervene and take new arrivals or very vulnerable people directly to our Night Centre, thereby preventing them from having to sleep rough. The Night Centre is a life-saving service and is an invaluable resource for outreach workers as it can be accessed immediately. It provides temporary shelter all year round and is vital during the coldest Winter months.

During 2008, we targeted the most entrenched, long-term rough sleepers. We have had some notable successes, further reducing the numbers of rough sleepers in our areas, which is host to the highest number of homeless people in the UK.

From May to October, our Outreach Team helped 25 people to achieve sustainable moves off the street into accommodation, and a further 105 individuals accessed services at our Day Centre as a result of being contacted on the street.

Joan's Story *

Joan is 68 years old and suffers from depression. She left her husband and grown children and came to London with no money or possessions. She was found sleeping in a shop doorway, and at first, our outreach worker couldn't tell whether she was male or a female because she was in such a poor state.

She was resistant to help at first, and unable to trust people, but we eventually persuaded her to come to our Centre, where she was able to have a hot shower and a nutritious meal.

Joan was given an open referral to our Night Centre which meant that she had a warm, safe place to sleep until we found suitable accommodation for her. We found a place for her at a specialist hostel, which she accepted. With our continued support Joan has recently moved from there into her own flat which is a semi-independent housing project, so she is making great progress. When she is ready we hope to put Joan back in touch with family and friends.

about us

The Connection at St Martin's is a registered charity helping homeless people in central London, and is open every day and night of the week. We offer advice, care and support in a welcoming and friendly environment to over 200 people every day and night.

We provide a comprehensive range of specialist services which include street outreach, a Night Centre, a drop-in Day Centre, housing advice and referrals, support for mental health and substance misuse issues and an education, training and employment service. We also offer a range of engagement activities and support groups to help people make friends, build confidence and enhance self-esteem.

By encouraging each person to address the issues which caused their homelessness, we help them gain the skills and confidence to make lasting changes in their lives.

The Connection at St Martin-in-the-Fields

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fax
020 7930 9194

email
appeals@cstm.org.uk

website
www.connection-at-stmartins.org.uk

how you can help

Regular donations

Regular donations mean that we can continue to provide life-changing services to homeless people.

- £10 a month will pay for hot meals and showers for homeless people
- £15 a month will pay for rough sleepers to receive housing advice and be referred to accommodation
- £25 a month will pay for job-seeking homeless people to receive careers advice and job search support
- £50 a month will pay for a homeless person to take our 6 week training course which greatly improves their chances of getting off the streets and securing employment.

If you would like to make a regular donation towards our work, you can print off a standing order from our website or call us on 020 7766 5555 and we will send the form out to you.

Leave a gift in your Will

Including a gift to The Connection at St Martin's in your Will is one of the ways that you can make a huge difference to the lives of homeless people for many years to come. Your valuable contribution will ensure that future generations of homeless people can continue receiving the help and support they need to help turn their lives around. We have included a guide to giving with this Newsletter. If you would like to talk your decision through with one of our fundraising team first, or for further information about our work, please do not hesitate to contact our Appeals Team on 020 7766 5555 or email appeals@cstm.org.uk

It costs £4.2 million a year to run The Connection at St Martin's – 95p in every pound we spend goes directly towards running our services. We couldn't do this without your support – thank you.

night centre

Saving lives in the coldest winter months



Our Night Centre is literally life-saving facility and the only one of its kind in the country. It is a free service which can be accessed immediately. It provides temporary shelter all year around and is vital during the coldest Winter months.



One of our Outreach Workers out on the streets of London

Image © The Times

Our Night Centre is literally a life saving facility and the only one of its kind in the country. It provides temporary, emergency respite to the most vulnerable rough sleepers and those at risk on the streets. It is open all year round but is a particularly crucial service during the coldest Winter months. It can be accessed immediately and provides an alternative to more formal accommodation which may be too daunting for the most vulnerable street homeless people to access. As well as being a place of safety and warmth, where clients can get a shower and hot meal, the Night Centre gives us a vital opportunity to begin helping particularly vulnerable clients find longer-term solutions to homelessness.

sleeping out on the streets. These efforts, and an increase in self-referrals by clients pushed our daily numbers from 40 to up to 90 a night. At absolute full capacity, we had to increase our Night Centre staffing and provisions to meet the increased demand.

During 2008, 1000 people made 800 visits to the Night Centre. Of this number, 76 were young people (a quarter were under 21), and a further quarter were young women. The great majority had been sleeping rough. This included moves into hostel and other accommodation, re-connections to local authorities, and to other appropriate services.

Michael's story*

Michael is 33 years old. He first came to the Day Centre in October 2008 having slept rough on and off for nearly ten years in between working. He had several long admissions to psychiatric hospitals for attempting suicide and clinical depression. When we met Michael he was in the process of starving himself to death, had lost his job and flat, had no source of income, and had not seen a doctor for several years. He was emaciated and withdrawn.

We booked Michael into the Night Centre where he had hot meals and we arranged for him to see a doctor and Mental Health worker.

We helped him to receive benefits and tried to encourage him to engage with and trust us. Eventually Michael became more relaxed with us and joined in several of our group activities. When he was ready, we helped him to find suitable accommodation.

Throughout this period Michael continued to use the Night Centre and by mid-November he was interviewed and accepted at a hostel. Michael is still there. He is receiving formal counselling, has not harmed himself and sees the doctor every fortnight.

* names have been changed to protect clients' privacy.

It costs us just over half a million pounds to run our Night Centre services each year. We need to raise £220,000 from public donations to continue delivering this service during the coming year. Your help is crucial.

To make a donation please visit our website – www.connection-at-stmartins.org.uk where you can make a secure payment online.

Alternatively, you can donate over the phone by calling 0207 766 5555 during office hours or send a cheque made payable to **The Connection at St Martin's to Appeals Office, 12 Adelaide Street, London WC2N 4HW.**

for more information, news and events visit our website
www.connection-at-stmartins.org.uk



Getting a hot meal for the night

In Winter 2008, our Street Outreach team doubled the number of street visits in an attempt to get homeless people off the streets quickly and into warm, sheltered accommodation. With weather conditions plummeting below zero, it became a life and death matter for those

Meet Lesley



I am glad to know these services are here when I need help. This place is a life-line. I have gained confidence in relating to people and am taking new chances and different steps.

At the age of 25 Lesley's marriage ended. She lost her home and children and became "directionless and lost". She sought solace in alcohol and remained homeless for about 20 years, living on the streets and in hostels.

When she first came to The Connection at St Martin's for help, she was very isolated. She started using many of the services and engagement activities that we offer. One service in particular that Leslie benefitted from was the Women's Group. She says: –

"I like coming to the Women's Group. It gives me a sense of security and companionship with the other women – a connection. I have space to be emotional and don't feel afraid or ashamed to show my feelings and be myself.

Since coming to The Connection, Leslie's confidence and self-esteem has grown. Staff at our employment, training and education service, helped her to enrol at a local college and she is now attending literacy classes two days a week.

Christmas cheer

Thanks to everyone who bought our Christmas cards and who gave generously not only at Christmas, but throughout the year. Last year's St Martin-in-the-Fields BBC Radio 4 Christmas Appeal was again a huge success raising a massive £730,000. Half the total money raised will go towards helping us to provide essential services for London's homeless people. Thank you to everyone who also gave so generously to this.

Art Show

We recently held our bi-annual client art show on March 25th. It was a great evening, enjoyed by all who attended. Most of the work on display was sold and the artists mingled with guests to talk about their work and experiences. Our next show will be held in the Autumn. If you would like to attend please call the Events Team on 020 7766 5555.

Homeless in the Capital display raises the roof

Museum of London's recent exhibition Homeless in the Capital, a project developed by members of our Oral History Group ended on February 22nd. It was extremely popular and attended by over 63,000 people. It also received a lot of press and media attention. The exhibition raised awareness of the issue of homelessness through personal diaries, video and poetry.

events



Flora London Marathon 26th April 2009

This year's Flora London Marathon will take place on Sunday 26th April 2009. We have now allocated our places and wish all of our runners the very best of luck. This is always a great family day out, and your support on the day would make a huge difference. So come and cheer the runners along. If you are interested in taking up the challenge in 2010 for London's homeless and would like to help us to raise funds towards our work, please contact our Events Team on 020 7766 5555 or email events@cstm.org.uk

Annual Pilgrimage, 22nd- 25th May 2009

The 18th Annual Pilgrimage to Canterbury will take place from 22nd – 25th May 2009. The Pilgrimage attracts people from all walks of life and is a truly memorable experience. It takes 4 days to complete and you can walk all the way or join us at various points along the way. If you would like to have an unforgettable Bank Holiday weekend, and raise funds for The Connection at St Martin's please call 020 7766 5522 or email lesley.cannon@cstm.org.uk.

Asics British 10k London Run, 12th July 2009

The annual Asics British 10K London Run will be taking place this year on Sunday, July 12th 2009. Over 10,000 runners will run past some of central London's most famous and historic landmarks. We have 18 guaranteed places available for runners who would like to help raise funds to help keep our services running. For an application pack and to find out more, please contact our Events Team on 020 7766 5555 or email events@cstm.org.uk.