

## Chief Executive's update.....

**Colin Glover, Chief Executive of The Connection at St Martin's, celebrates the positive impact that the new building and improved services have had on homeless people's lives.**

The day after we opened one of our long term users told me that 'this building makes me feel special'. I felt like punching the air in celebration. That was exactly what I wanted to hear after nearly six years of planning and two years of disruption and difficulty. But moving back into No 12 Adelaide Street is not an end in itself. So what are we going to do with our special building?

To begin with we are maintaining all our current services. The Day Centre will be open, as always, every day serving meals, providing practical care, access to health care and specialist advice about housing, and other issues associated with homelessness. The Night Centre

will be open every evening from 10.00pm to 7.00am, taking 40 people off the streets as a stepping stone to more permanent solutions. Groups will still run in the afternoon and evening, many of whom run with partner agencies, and casework with individuals will take place as and when needed throughout the day.

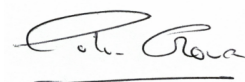
Our Outreach team will continue to work on the streets. Our Workspace team will double its efforts to help our clients move into training and where possible into employment. We will continue to expand our Social Enterprise with the increasingly successful Connection Crew. But with storm clouds gathering over the economy, and

with potentially increased demand for our services coming at the very time when fundraising will become even more challenging, we cannot rest on our laurels. We also cannot risk thinking that having a special building is enough. We need to ensure that having the best possible building means that we continue to provide the best possible services.

We need to ask ourselves continually whether we could be doing more or doing what we do better. We owe this to all those who have supported us and to those who have invested in our magnificent new building, a building which has clearly broken the mould in day centre provision. We must

ensure that we use it to its maximum potential, to deliver the maximum impact for each and every one of the 5,500 different people who visit us each year.

*"The re-opening has been a great success and we are delighted to be back in our new building. I am extremely proud that we managed to continue running our services for homeless people, while our organisation was effectively homeless itself."*

## The Connection re-launched

**Success and celebration as we open our doors once again**



We celebrated the move back into our newly refurbished building with an official re-opening event which took place on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2008. The evening was a huge success and was very well attended by funders and friends. Alistair Darling gave an inspiring and supportive speech and The Lord Mayor of Westminster, Cllr Louise Hyams (one of our Trustees), gave the official opening speech.

Entertainment was provided by The Fair Phyllistines who sang two songs, including Cole Porter's *Day and Night*, a poignant choice of song chosen to reflect how The Connection is there for people whenever they need us.

The re-opening on 9<sup>th</sup> July also marked the launch of *Charing Cross: A Graphic Novel* by Nils Norman, produced in conjunction with the Serpentine Gallery and homeless clients from The Connection at St Martin's.

## Transformations—The Day Centre

### Ground Floor—Activities Room



**A client using our recently refurbished Activities Room**

*“The new building is fantastic. It is wonderfully bright, airy and spacious. We have received so many positive comments about the building. It has made both staff and clients feel quite proud to be in such a beautiful space. The clients say it makes them feel special”*

**Angela Protain**  
Day Centre  
Manager

With the refurbishment of our building, our Day Centre has undergone a huge transformation. The Activities Room is the first room you enter when you walk from the Reception area on the ground floor.

It is a relaxing space where homeless people can come to meet friends and talk to support workers, read books from the library,

use the internet or receive alternative therapies such as reflexology.

The Day Centre provides a range of groups and engagement activities to meet the needs of particular groups of homeless people. These groups include art, a women’s group, young persons group, substance misuse, rough sleepers group, Linked group (black & minority

ethnic), singing, chess and football

These groups help build confidence and provide a safe space where people can come to engage with others in a supportive environment. The groups also help people feel less isolated and can help people to move forward in specific areas of their lives. Many of these groups take place in the Activities Room.

### Basement—Practical services

In the basement of the building, basic but essential services such as showers, laundry and locker facilities have been revamped and as a result, increased the numbers who can use them by 20%.

The café is very much at the heart of the day centre and, open every day of the week, it serves up a variety of delicious food to meet the diverse taste of our client group.

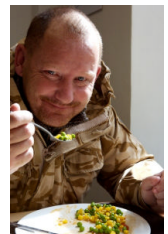
Richard Partridge, Catering Manager at The Connection said: “To most homeless people having a hot meal is the most important focus of any day. With our new kitchen and dining area we can provide nutritious and affordable meals all year round. It is a comforting, welcoming and sociable environment where people can also meet friends or get support from our team of workers and volunteers”.

The basement also offers

other key services.

These include a dedicated space for young homeless people to get specialist support and advice.

We also have a separate Healthcare area where homeless people can have regular appointments with a GP or Nurse



### 1st Floor—Employment & Training

Arranged over 3 large interconnecting rooms on the first floor you will find Workspace, our employment and training area. This grand space provides opportunities for London’s homeless people to receive specialist training, advice

and support in areas such as vocational guidance, job search support - CV preparation, work place visits, basic skills training, financial literacy, accredited IT training, work placements, employment support and mentoring, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Employment and training

is the key to independent living and personal development for most homeless people and is the single most important route out of homelessness. In 2007, the team helped over 700 people.

Over the next 3 years we plan to double the amount of people we help to 1,500.

**Help and support with IIT skills**



**1st floor contd.**

**Art and Creativity**



**Detail from "Peacock"**  
A painting by one of our art group members

We celebrated our first official art show in the new building on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2008. Our art group, which

runs every day, is a space where some of London's most vulnerable homeless people can come to share their experiences of homelessness and express their creativity in a welcoming and supportive environment. The group is very popular and well attended and can have a transformational effect on people's lives.

All of the work on show at the exhibition was pro-

duced by members of the group.

The exhibitions will take place twice yearly and are a great way to see and buy affordable, inspiring and original paintings, drawings, prints and mixed media pieces, with 80% of the sales going directly to the artist, and the remaining 20% reinvested back into buying art supplies for the group. Wyn Newman, Co-ordinator of the art group

said "We are delighted to be back in our beautiful new building. The art room provides wonderful light and space for people to come and create work in a safe and calm environment. The quality of the work produced by our clients is always excellent and it is great to showcase their talents to people who may not otherwise have an opportunity to see it".

**Meet Ken**

*Ken is a regular member of the art group*

"I have been coming to The Connection for roughly 12 months now. I get great satisfaction from the art group when I see my project completed.

The art group has given me a lot of confidence and self-belief that if I put my energy into it the results are tremendous. My inspiration comes from having clear

goals and objectives.

I think my future is now looking up because I am using my energies in a more constructive way .

I would like to thank the staff especially all the volunteers in the art group for the encouragement given to me when I thought I couldn't do art".



*"The art group has given me a lot of confidence and self-belief that if I put my energy into it, the results are tremendous"*

**Ken**

**Creative Connections**

*Nils Norman & the Serpentine Gallery launch Charing Cross at The Connection*



**Detail from "Chuggers"**  
by Nils Norman

Contemporary artist Nils Norman, was invited by the The Connection to create a new work in response to the charity's location in central London and the way service users interact with the surroundings. Nils created *Charing Cross: A Graphic Novel* , a book that explores historical concepts of homelessness

Over two years, Nils worked with members of the art group plus other groups at The Connection at St Martin's to map their experiences, uncovering an invisible geography in and around some of the world's most famous public spaces including Victoria Embankment and The Strand.

The launch of *Charing Cross*, took place alongside the official re-opening of The Connection at St Martin's new building on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2008. Nils kindly donated two large artworks plus 6 smaller images from the graphic novel, which are permanently installed in the basement area of our newly refurbished building.

# News...News....News....

## The Secret Millionaire

The Connection at St Martin's recently featured on the Channel 4 programme "The Secret Millionaire". The episode showed millionaire Daniel Smith going undercover as a "volunteer" for ten days, living in a council block and visiting various homeless agencies and projects in London.

He visited The Connection for a number of days and undertook various duties including serving food and participating in some of the group activities. He was a fantastic volunteer and had a great rapport with staff and clients alike, but his true identity remained a secret until he presented our Day

Centre Manager, Angela Protain, with a cheque for £10,000. An astonished Angela said: "We were delighted to receive such a generous amount of money. Through Daniel's generosity The Connection at St Martin's was able to set up a bursary for homeless people".

Speaking about the impact that participating in the series had on him, Daniel said, "The experience has changed my view on life.....I never knew how nice it was to give something back".

## New Website

We launched our new website in July this year. The site is much

more user friendly with many new features. You can find out about all of the services we provide and donating on-line couldn't be easier. You can also receive our twice yearly newsletter by going to the home page [www.connection-st-smartins.org.uk](http://www.connection-st-smartins.org.uk) and clicking *sign up* to subscribe by email.

**A big THANK YOU to all of our supporters this year, especially those who ran in this year's Flora London Marathon and Asics British 10K. Your support has made a huge difference to the lives of London's most vulnerable homeless people. If you are interested in participating in the London Marathon or British 10k for 2009, please call 020 7766 5555 or email [events@cstm.org.uk](mailto:events@cstm.org.uk)**

## Forthcoming Events

### BBC Radio 4 Christmas Appeal 2008

St Martin-in-the-Fields BBC Radio 4 Christmas Appeal will be broadcast this year on 7th December. The Appeal helps to transform the lives of thousands of homeless and vulnerable people across the UK. You can help to make a difference, by tuning in to this year's broadcast at the following times:

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December** – 7.55am & 9.27pm **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December** - 3.25pm.

**Received with Thanks—Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December** – 9.45 & 5.40 & **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December** – 3.45pm

### Oral History Project

Clients from The Connection at St Martin's have been working on an exciting project in collaboration with the Museum of London, which will culminate in an exhibition to be held at the Museum in December 2008.

The project which provides a permanent record and collection of life stories from the homeless community highlights the causes and realities of homelessness as experienced by the project members, through the media of writing and video.

The exhibition will be open to the general public at the Museum of London from 4<sup>th</sup> December 2008 until 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2009.

## How you can help us

### Leave a gift in your will

Including a gift in your will to The Connection at St. Martin's is one of the ways that you can make a huge difference to homeless people's lives, now and in the future. Your gift doesn't have to be big and the process is simple. If you feel you would like to help us in this way, we suggest that you contact a solicitor, in the first instance, who can give you impartial advice. If you would like to talk your decision through with one of our fundraising team, or if you have any questions about supporting our work with a gift, please contact us on 020 7766 5555.



### Christmas Cards

You can help support our work this year by purchasing some of our Christmas cards. We have a wide range of affordable cards for sale which can be bought at Card Aid and Cards for Good Causes shops around central London, including St. Martin-in-the-Fields.

Download a brochure from our website [www.connection-at-stmartins.org.uk](http://www.connection-at-stmartins.org.uk)