

Read Joanne's story inside

Spring Newsletter 2017  
**connect**

**The Connection**  
at St Martin-in-the-Fields

**The Connection at St Martin's helps thousands of homeless people every year. We guide people through our comprehensive services so that they can move towards independence and away from the streets.**

**Every day:**

- 5 new rough sleepers come to our door and are assessed by our Day Centre team
- 20 people get their clothes washed and dried
- 30+ people are helped by street outreach
- 90 people enjoy a home cooked lunch in our Day Centre

**How you can help:**

Donate today 020 7766 5555/ Set up a monthly standing order or payroll giving/ Make a difference for years to come by leaving a gift in your Will/ Fundraise for us. Whether it be a challenge event or a coffee morning it all makes a difference/ Volunteer at our centre/ Tell your family and friends about us

**How your donations make a difference:**

- £5 could provide someone with a home-cooked hot lunch and a shower
- £10 could pay for a travel card to help someone attend a job interview
- £50 could provide someone with one nights emergency accomodaiton in our Night Centre
- £100 could help fund our Outreach Workers, who go out onto the streets every night, helping keep rough sleepers safe

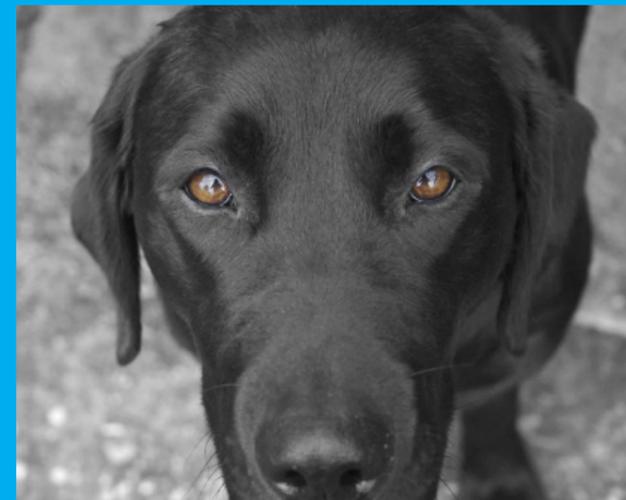
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at St Martin-in-the-Fields  
The Connection at St Martin-in-the-Fields  
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# Welcome to our spring newsletter.

**Sleeping rough is not only physically demanding and difficult but it can also take a toll on people's mental health. Nearly 70% of rough sleepers need support for a mental health problem.**

You've already heard from Simon in the letter and later on in this newsletter you'll hear from Joanne. Both of them got pushed to breaking point as they struggled on the streets. With your help, we were able to offer them the support they needed both physically and mentally. They're both doing really well now, but we still need your donations to help others who are in crisis.

You'll also hear about the painting and decorating course we recently ran, which has helped five clients on the road back to work. And also from Kaz, our Deputy Day Centre manager, who spoke to us about man's best friend on the streets.



**We hope you enjoy this update, and thank you once again for supporting homeless people.**

# Get involved

We've had a rocky start to 2017 across the world. So why not give yourself something else to focus on and sign up to one of our challenge events. We also know that this isn't for everyone, so for those of you who would rather do something a little less active, we're asking you to do a bake sale for us during Mental Health Awareness week, which is 8th-14th May. Have a look at the flyers in here and get involved!

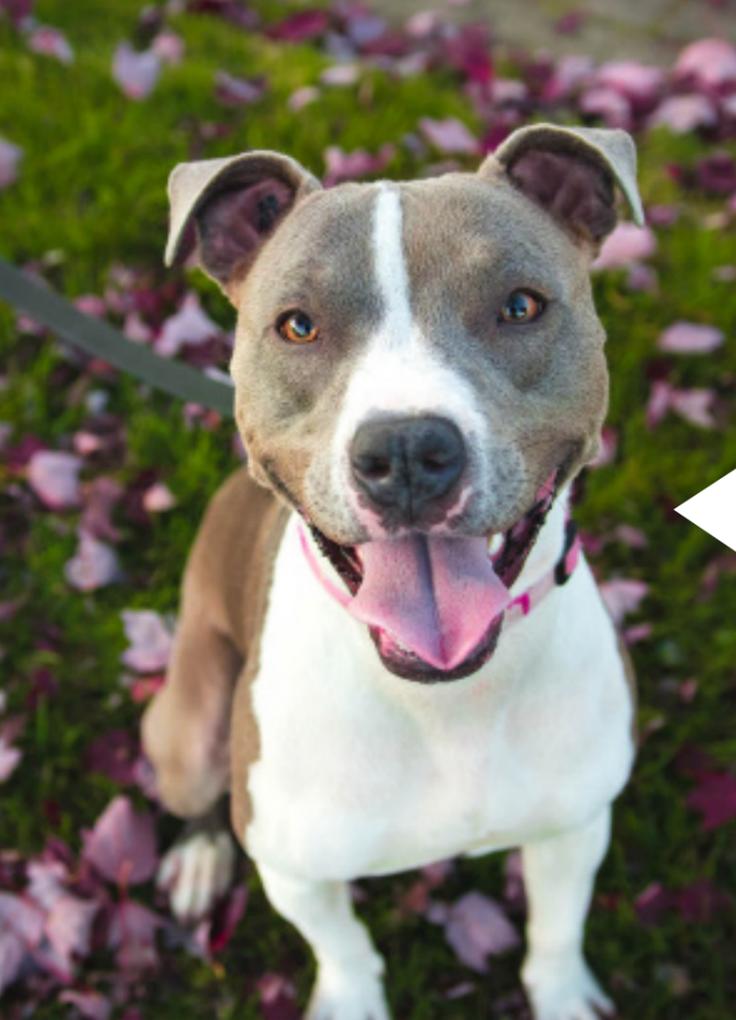


# The end of an era

Our Chief Executive, Colin Glover, is retiring in April this year, and we welcome Pam Orchard in his place. Pam joins us from Providence Row, the East London based homelessness organisation, where she has been Chief Executive since June 2011.

Colin came in as Chief Executive of the London Connection in 1990. Since then he has taken services for homeless people from strength to strength. During Colin's tenure, he has contributed to a reduction in the number of young people sleeping rough, led the merger between the London Connection and St Martin's Social Care Unit in 2003, and has overseen The Connection's response to many changes in the nature of homelessness. Mainly though, he has led the organisation to transform the lives of many thousands of homeless people.

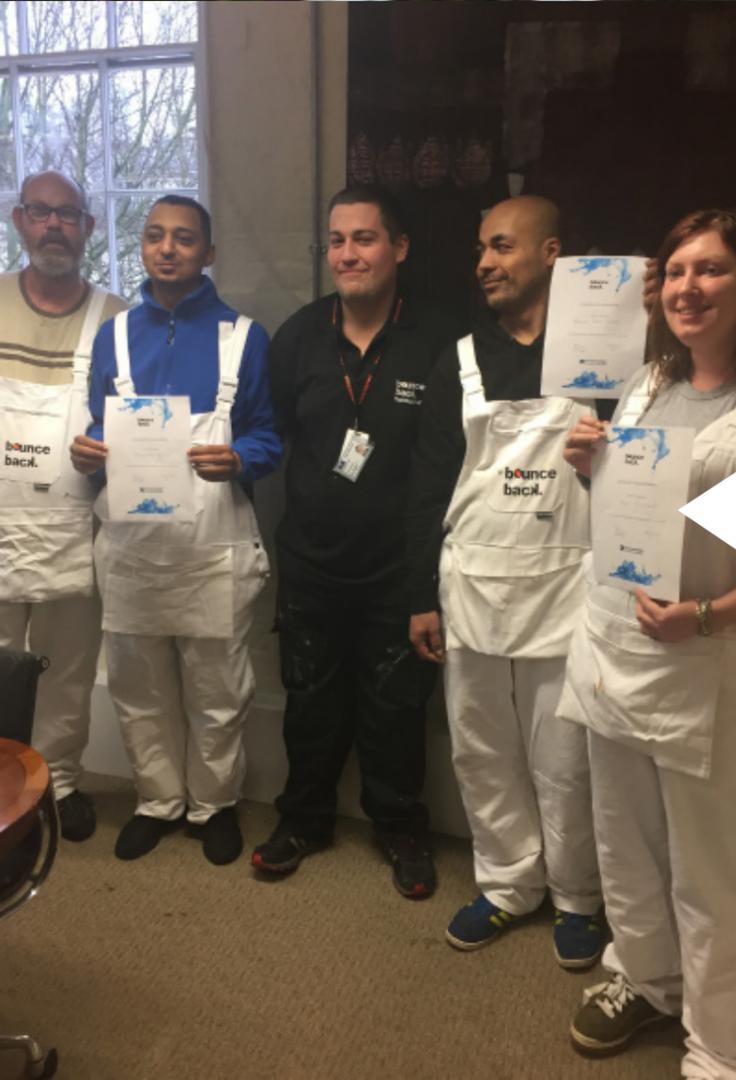
But all of this has only been possible thanks to your donations- so thank you!



**We get lots of questions about homeless people and dogs, so we wanted to tell you a bit about how we help people who come to us with dogs.**

Most of the homeless people that we see who have dogs had them before they came onto the streets, and don't want to give up their best friend- a dog can provide important companionship for someone. We spoke to Kaz, our Deputy Day Centre Manager and resident dog lover, about how we help people with dogs.

You can read the full interview on our website. Just look for the big pic of Bruce (left) on the front page!



**In February we ran a painting and decorating course for five of our clients in partnership with a charity called Bounce Back.**

The five day course gave our clients the opportunity to gain valuable work experience and tangible skills which they will now be able to use moving forward to find jobs or further work experience. Three of them are now taking part in a further six week course with Bounce Back in conjunction with Crisis.

Bounce Back are a social enterprise and charity who normally work in prisons teaching prisoners the skills needed to work in the construction industry, but are just starting to work with homeless people. The pilot project was a great success and we are hoping it will be the first of many.



**This is Joanne. She ended up rough sleeping last year- her story shows us how quickly things can change. How quickly things can spiral down:**

*"It started, well at the beginning of last year, everything was good. I was a bus driver, living with my mum and my children. I've been with Darren for four years but he didn't get on with my family. He got sent to prison in March last year, and I got depressed. I ended up taking an overdose in May. This meant I lost my bus driving license. I tried to take my own life twice. When Darren came out prison my mum said to me I couldn't stay there anymore. I thought she meant for just a few days. We had a little bit of money so we stayed in a B&B for a couple of days, but then the money ran out."*

Joanne and her partner found themselves sleeping rough on the streets of London. After four nights, our Outreach Workers found them and, thanks to your donations we were able to put them in our emergency Night Centre. For the next few months

Joanne stayed with us. She was grateful for somewhere to stay but it wasn't easy and she was struggling with her mental health. She tried to cope through drinking and developed cellulitis- which meant she found walking really hard, a real problem for someone with nowhere to go:

*"With the overdose, the drinking, the cellulitis, having nowhere to live and having all the traumas; staying here, it was absolutely brilliant."*

With your help Joanne has found a new home, has stopped drinking and is feeling much more positive about the future:

*"But without this place, I wouldn't be where I am now; I've had to go through that to get out of the other side. And now I feel so much better and I've got a place. This is a new start to everything; I'm looking towards getting back to work."*

**Without your support Joanne wouldn't be back on her feet- so thank you.**