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Here we are again at the end of another year. Despite funding still being tight, the charity continues to grow in the number of people reached and helped.

The Banquet Run

This year so far we have given out approximately 5,250 meals to those attending the Banquet Run. We expect the next few winter months to continue to be very busy, as people struggle to make ends meet, and those who are homeless and vulnerable are particularly at risk, especially single men 25 and over.

In the coming months we are hoping to extend the Banquet Run sessions to cover a Saturday, this will be carried out as a pilot scheme for ten weeks to see what the need is and to establish a time that is going to be most helpful to those who are homeless.

Residential and Day programmes.

This year the residential program has been full most of the time, apart from changeover periods (when one resident moves on and a new one moves in). Numbers of referrals have gone through the roof; we have had 37 referrals for the residential programme. Obviously we cannot, at this point, help everyone but we are seeing some fantastic results for those people who join and stay for the full programme.

Moving Forward

When residents move on from the New Life Centre, some choose not to keep in touch, feeling that it's part of the past, and want to start afresh. Others keep in touch on a regular basis, which is great; it's always lovely to hear from people who have stayed at the New Life Centre. The three men below were on the programme and have kept in touch. Here is a brief update on what they are doing now.

In 2010 'Jo', who gave his story in one of the newsletters, graduated from the programme in July 2010. Life hasn't been without its highs and lows for Jo, but he is doing well and is planning to get married to his partner next year. In fact, he has asked Dave (Kidley) to be his best man. (Pictures to follow next year)

'Danny', who was with us for ten months (who gave his story in the December 2010 issue) is now living in London and doing well. He now has his own flat and is still off the drugs.

'Colin' – with us for six months this year - now has his own flat and is still alcohol-free and hoping to start a job in January.



New Activities

With the addition of the new Cabin the services we are able to offer is growing. For the last few months we have been able to offer counselling in the form of therapeutic art sessions to those on the residential programme. This service has been offered on a voluntary basis by a professional counsellor. More recently we have had a chiropodist and volunteers who have given their time to come and treat the feet of the residents and other vulnerable people with whom we work. The volunteers have washed feet, the chiropodist has then treated the feet and then the feet have been treated to a wonderful foot massage.

We have had a sculptor who has come and given instruction in using clay, wicker-work and batik. The residents have also been treated to other sessions in various craftwork and games evenings. Of course the “Cabin” is used for other programme- related sessions, such as teaching IT skills to the residents, one-to-one reviews, studies and, of course, Bev has her office in the Cabin, offering more space and privacy than the original space in the home. Perhaps more importantly the residents love the cabin and have taken responsibility for cleaning and looking after it and have some of their art work proudly displayed on the walls and shelves.

We really feel the Cabin is a gift from God. We would like to thank all those of you have contributed to the purchase of the cabin, the furniture and given time and energy to help make the running of the cabin such a success.

Here is the story of a young man called Mike who has been with us for just four months.

Hey! My name is Mike. I had a pretty normal upbringing. My parents have always been there for me and I have had a loving family.

Around the age of 13, when at secondary school, a group of friends and myself started getting into smoking cannabis and drinking. By the age of 15 we all were pretty into the drugs and drink, experimenting with all sorts of drugs. Because of all this I messed up my exams and got really disappointing grades. After this I got a job as an apprentice mechanic at a local garage. It was here that I met a girl, who became pregnant, so I had to leave the apprentice job because the money was poor. My daughter was born, but I was in and out of jobs trying to support my young family and also at the same time still with my mates, drinking and smoking weed and generally making a mess of my life. My daughter’s mum and I took a break from each other. After that I seemed to be in and out of relationships, never really being able to settle down. I got a job in a pub, my head was in a mess and I started drinking every day. Then I met a girl I had known only a fortnight, we moved out of town to stay with her parents. Very shortly after this, I was driving her dad home one day, and I crashed the car, killing him and severely injuring myself. When I came out of hospital I was charged with causing death by careless driving. I was sent to prison for forty months, during my time there I got a heroin habit. When released I reoffended and went back to jail for another eight months, my heroin habit grew and when I was released I continued taking the drug for three years and also in that time became addicted to crack. I was funding my habit by “dealing”, and I had started stealing from my family, my head was getting so messed up and my habit was getting bigger.



One day it all got too much and I tried hanging myself. My mum, obviously concerned, got in touch with Dave and Bev from Morning Star (Salisbury). I arrived at the New Life Centre in August 2011 and slowly started to put my life in perspective. I then found my own faith in God and with His help and the support of Dave and Bev I am four months clean and doing well. I am now putting good foundations down in my life, the past has no more hold over me and with the support from Morning Star I am looking forward to my future life journey, with hope in my heart.

Mike

Thank you

We would like to finish this last newsletter for this year, by thanking all of our volunteers, who have worked tirelessly to help support the work of the charity. Our volunteers cover every aspect of the work of the charity, including admin support, cooking for or serving at the Banquet Run, teaching various skills to the residents, and helping with various fundraising events. Without you we wouldn't be able to meet the needs of so many people.

We would also like to thank all those of you who have supported the work of the charity financially this year. As you may know, we do not receive any government or statutory funding and even charitable funding from Trusts is becoming increasingly difficult to come by and so we rely heavily on the support our 'Friends of Morning Star' and also those of you who support us financially through the year.

I'm sure like me, when you hear stories like Mike's on the previous page, and those of other people who have shared stories throughout the year, you realise just how important the work of Morning Star is in saving and changing lives around for good. For the staff who work with those who are homeless, vulnerable, and caught up in the terrible downward spiral of drugs and alcohol, we are so thankful to everyone who partners with us in this work, whether practically as a volunteer or whether it's by becoming a 'Friend of Morning Star' or donating financially once a year. Without you we wouldn't have the privilege of seeing lives turned around. Many of the people you have heard about, would probably not be alive today to tell their stories.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Board, who oversee the work of the charity and make sure that all policies, and legal requirements are kept up-to-date. Their support, love and encouragement and wisdom is so very important to us, and the work of the charity.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a wonderful Christmas, and let's not forget

....He is the reason for the Season.

