

Threshold

Homeless Care supporting Homeless & Vulnerable People

Threshold newsletter number 15

HOMELESS CARE

Please Help the Hungry!

Food for Thought, our community food share scheme has been running for ten years now but we are seeing an ever increasing demand for emergency food parcels from people who are desperate to put a meal on the table for their families. It's not only those out of work who are struggling but also those who are employed on a low wage. Forget the bankers, A List celebrities and sportsmen and women at the top of their game, their lifestyles are the stuff of dreams for most of us for whom the reality is somewhat different. People on a minimum wage are likely to find life tough. Current hourly rates are £5.13 for 18-20, £6.50 for 21 and over and apprentices are likely to get just £2.73 an hour, so taking into account rising costs of looking after a family, it is not surprising that there are times when people can't cope.

Food for Thought can provide help quickly and discreetly to those in need. In addition to emergency parcels, we regularly deliver food to 52 local organisations including children's groups, school breakfast clubs, hostels and day centres for elderly men and women.

We are very thankful to all the local traders and manufacturers who contribute to Food for Thought throughout the year and to the churches, schools and individuals who help to fill our storecupboards at Harvest and Christmas, we couldn't manage without you. But - as more people come to us for help, we need to find additional sources of supply. Do you know of a group, company or organisation that we could approach for support?

For further information please ring Maidstone Day Centre on 01622 674064 or email: mdc@homelessinmaidstone.org.uk

For a free copy of our newsletter Threshold: please e-mail your name & address to mdc@homelessinmaidstone.org.uk or write to the Day Centre or see it on line from www.maidstonedaycentre.org.uk

If you would like to receive Threshold by email please email events@maidstonedaycentre.org.uk

Funding MDC

Funding an operation like Maidstone Day Centre is an ongoing task, but made possible by the kindness of people who care. Threshold went along to Vinters Business Park at Maidstone Studios to meet Jonathan Gauton, Chief Executive of Outset Group, a Kent based company that was established in 2002, advising businesses on legal matters and people management. That he leads this very successful enterprise hasn't stopped him being acutely aware of the difficulties encountered by some members of our community. To find out more about the lives and needs of homeless people in Maidstone, Jonathan (below) visited the Day Centre and saw a way that he and his staff could help.



"What attracted me to Maidstone Day Centre was that a national problem like homelessness was receiving a compassionate and local response," said Jonathan. "People in Maidstone had recognised the problem and reacted to it. It was what the Big Society was meant to be. When I visited the Day Centre I met Chairman Mike FitzGerald and found his enthusiasm infectious.

From a personal point of view, the historic Christian connection also influenced me," he told us. Homeless Care started life as Maidstone Christian Care and the support we have received from the local churches has played an important part in helping our work to continue. Jonathan, his wife and children are committed Christians; that they enjoy their faith can be seen in the cheerful and practical way that they take every opportunity to encourage individuals from chaotic and dysfunctional beginnings, to gain new skills and the confidence that will help them to succeed. After Jonathan's first visit to the Day Centre, he went back to talk about the problems of

homelessness to Outset's 40 or so employees. He wanted to help us and at the same time to encourage a sense of team work amongst his colleagues. In fact the Outset workforce needed little persuading and straightaway started organising sponsored events to raise money for Maidstone Day Centre.

"We had a static bike in the office and individual colleagues cycled the equivalent distance of the M25, 'that's 117 miles,'" Jonathan told us. And as if that wasn't punishment enough, they decided to recreate the gruelling three peaks challenge – but at Maidstone Studios. Outset's offices are two floors up and there are lifts but for the purpose of the challenge, contestants donned a heavy back pack then embarked on a seemingly endless, repetitive and gruelling climb up and down for 24 hours! Definitely not for the faint hearted!

Outset also provided equipment to refurbish some office space at Maidstone Day Centre. Jonathan understands and supports the aims of Maidstone Day Centre which are to help people progress, to rebuild damaged self-esteem and take charge of their own lives.

The IT training has been particularly important to our men and women as now all Benefit claims and housing bids have to be carried out online, not to mention job searches. Without a roof over your head, access to the internet is difficult and although you can use the Job Centre or the public library, sessions there are strictly time limited.

As if the physical efforts weren't enough, the Outset Group pledge a regular donation to help homeless and vulnerable people and the effects have been far reaching. As well as the IT training, the money has been used towards funding the Food for Thought project worker and driver. Food for Thought is our community food share scheme. We collect surplus goods from local traders and re distribute it to people who would otherwise go hungry. Each of the 52 organisations signed up with us for food donations is helping disadvantaged people in one way or another with support such as training in basic skills, so you can see the ripple effect of giving. A huge thank you to Jonathan and the Outset team for their kindness and determination to make a difference. You really have!

We are always grateful for any donation, however small and regular giving allows us to plan ahead. As well as seeking funding for the day to day running of Maidstone Day Centre, we are now fundraising to buy a suitable property for emergency and move on accommodation. It's a big commitment but we know that with a roof over their heads and the right guidance, homeless men and women in Maidstone can look forward to a better future.

If you would like further information about how you can help to make this happen, please look at our website www.maidstonedaycentre.org.uk or email: secretary@homelesscare.org.uk or ring the Day Centre on 01622 674064. For more about Outset go to: www.outsetuk.com

Hello & Goodbye

We have said a fond farewell to Sue Tallwin who has moved on after devoting the last 10 years at Maidstone Day Centre to supporting homeless and vulnerable people.

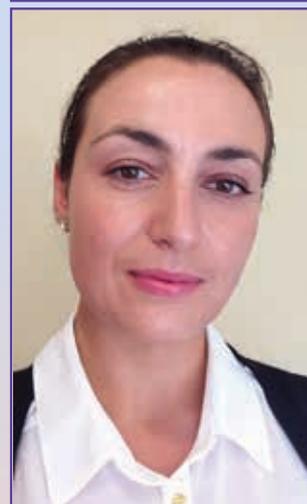
Sue (right), who had been the manager since 2010 worked above and beyond what was expected of her and has always gone the extra mile to help people going through a difficult time in their lives. She will be missed by staff, clients and trustees who wish her well for the future and we send her thanks for a job well done.

The new manager of Maidstone Day Centre is Zofia Grzymala (right). Zofia who comes from Sanctuary Housing. Zofia joins us at an exciting time of change and we look forward to working with her.

Food For Thought driver and Project worker, Adam Dyer, has also left us to move on to pastures new. We thank him for doing an excellent job for Food for Thought and for his part in developing the project to cope with the increase in numbers of people who do not get enough to eat.

Our latest recruit is Tracy Champion (right) who will be spending the next six months with us as a resettlement project worker. One of her tasks will be to help clients at Maidstone Day Centre and our hostel, Goodsell House, to access benefits, accommodation and job search online.

Mike Philps (right) is our new Food For Thought driver and Project worker.



You Can Help

Every year our Food for Thought programme and the Kent Messenger Group work together on a joint promotion called "You CAN help"

This year from Friday 21 November, when the Kent Messenger will publish it's first of the weekly articles promoting the event, until Christmas there will be many collection points around the borough, mainly at supermarkets, schools and other donation points.



Friends of Maidstone Day Centre

Many of the volunteers organising collections of food and returns to the Maidstone Day Centre storage points are Friends of Maidstone Day Centre. Make sure you say hello to them when you see them working hard and giving up their valuable time at the various collection points around the area.



Friends of Maidstone Day Centre:

Paul Rodman (Chairman),
07966 424945 friendschair@maidstonedaycentre.org.uk
Glenda Lambert (Secretary)
07714 416977 friendssec@maidstonedaycentre.org.uk
Michelle Rodman,
John Baker, Sylvia Baker, Tuula Davis,
David Frost, Chris Frost and Lynn Kent.

Merry Christmas from The Hengist Restaurant

A new sponsor for Maidstone Day Centre - The Hengist Restaurant in Aylesford, believe in traditional top quality standards clearly demonstrated in their working policies throughout the restaurant.

Downstairs for a coffee or a drink or eating in their casual dining area or upstairs in their champagne bar and in the A la Carte restaurant, wherever you choose you will be treated with the upmost courtesy and can expect first class treatment.



It is because of the Hengist Restaurant values that they believe that everyone in the UK should celebrate Christmas, so they are donating Christmas Dinner to the homeless and vulnerable in Maidstone. On Tuesday 23 December Hengist will deliver a ready cooked first class Christmas lunch.

No matter what the diners personal circumstances they will have a superb traditional Christmas lunch with all the trimmings, courtesy of the Hengist Restaurant.

If you book Christmas Day Lunch at The Hengist Restaurant £10 per person will be donated to the Homeless Care operation. so let's work to together and make a difference, please call 01622 885800 or go online www.hengistrestaurant.co.uk

Helping homeless and vulnerable people at Maidstone Day Centre

Text CARE88 £2 / £5 / £10 to 70070 to donate now. eg CARE88 £5

Homeless Care
Registered charity number 1151412



Please help us to help others

Maidstone Day Centre is there to help homeless and vulnerable people turn their lives around. The initial need is usually for hot showers, a good home cooked meal, clean clothes and a warm sleeping bag for cold nights. After that work starts on obtaining Benefits, medical attention and addressing any drug/alcohol or mental health needs. The search for accommodation will be next on the list, way before job seeking, because you are unlikely to find work if you do not have an address.

We rely on donations and grants to run this service and we are always grateful to receive financial support whether by regular giving, wills or a one off gift.

Increase the value of your gift

Using Gift Aid means that for every pound you give, we get an extra 25 pence from the Inland Revenue, helping your donation to go further.

This means that £10.00 can be turned into £12.50 just so long as donations are made through Gift Aid. Imagine what a difference that could make to our work and it won't cost you a penny more.

So if you would like your donation to go further, please Gift Aid it by completing the form on the top right and returning it to Homeless Care.

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please e-mail your name & address to
mdc@homelessinmaidstone.org.uk or write to the
Day Centre or see it online from
www.maidstonedaycentre.org.uk
or www.homelesscare.org.uk**

GIFT AID DECLARATION To: The Hon Treasurer, Homeless Care, 6 Denton Close, Willington Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 8ER

I wish Homeless Care to treat all donations I have made in the last four years and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise as Gift Aid donations

Signature _____

Date _____

Full Name (in caps) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone number _____

E mail _____

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/ or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities (including churches) and Community Amateur Sports Clubs that I donate to, will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year.

I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

Please notify the Treasurer of Homeless Care if you wish to cancel this declaration, change your address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income or capital gains.
Registered charity number 1151412

How to give

By cheque payable to: Homeless Care and send to: The Treasurer, Homeless Care, 6 Denton Close, Maidstone, ME15 8ER or by direct transfer to Homeless Care's bank account: Sort Code 40-52-40 Account Number 00023904

Log on to our website: www.maidstonedaycentre.org.uk and click on the 'donate' button on one of the pages.

To find out more about giving through regular donations, wills or with cash, please ring The Hon. Treasurer on 01622 202239

Chairman: Mike FitzGerald. Company Secretary: Angela Clay **Maidstone Day Centre** 15 Knightrider Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6LP
01622 674064 mdc@homelessinmaidstone.org.uk www.maidstonedaycentre.org.uk

HOMELESS CARE



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You can give online through our website www.maidstonedaycentre.org.uk or
text CARE88 £2 / £5 / £10 to 70070 to donate now eg CARE88 £10 or for Gift Aid support - see above

