

ANNUAL REVIEW 07/08



INTRODUCTION

LETTER FROM OUR CEO

Recently I was reading a book by Selwyn Hughes entitled, 'How to Help a Friend'. In it Selwyn suggests that all of us have three psychological needs. I was struck how these needs linked with Stepping Stones Trust's (SST) strap-line, 'A home (belonging), a job (achievement) and a church (self-worth).' The objectives of this strap-line are achieved through SST's four phased operation from within the prison, 'through the gate' to our homes and independent living, demonstrably reducing the likelihood of re-offending. This 'seamless' rehabilitation programme can take several years for a prisoner to complete, during which time many of our clients develop a loyalty, friendship and respect for the staff of SST.

While obtaining 'a home' and 'a church' are relatively easy, finding 'a job' is difficult for ex-offenders, especially for those convicted of sex offences. During the year we set up a small group, the Social Enterprise Group, that have been considering various ways of trying to assist our offenders with employment, possibly through SST becoming a trading company and thus providing employment for our clients – one idea is for the trading company to renovate the properties we use.

There are several new projects we are exploring:-

- A pilot project to annually accommodate up to 30 former sex offenders, who require accommodation after living in London bail hostels.
- A 'Circles of Support' project for former sex offenders.
- Providing accommodation in Yorkshire for three female offenders released from custody.
- A new-build, specially designed hostel for prolific and persistent offenders.
- BtW in two other prisons.

The finances have been under strain this year, due the requirement to fundraise for our BtW projects as well as renovation costs for the move-on and independent accommodation. We are very grateful to those who have funded SST, our supporters, volunteers and dedicated and experienced staff, ably led by our CEO, Mick Holloway.

Peter Denison
Chair

Dear Friends,

Having established the four phase mission last year, supporting people in prison, in our hostels, in shared move-on accommodation and in independent flats, Stepping Stones Trust (SST) has consolidated its position.

The Beyond the Wall (BtW) project is now in two London prisons, HMP Wormwood Scrubs and HMP Belmarsh, with the Wormwood Scrubs BtW project, in its fourth year of operation, increasingly effective in housing those prisoners who would otherwise be homeless on release. Both Hope House and Bridge House have improved their Supporting People Quality Scores and SST has achieved approved provider status for supported housing for ex-offenders in London Borough of Croydon.

This year, SST is housing 16 men in Phase 3 shared accommodation in the private rented market and, despite the challenges of working with this particular client group, three of the six addresses are operating at

100% occupancy, 82% overall. We continue to provide deposit guarantees for 7 ex-residents in Phase 4 independent flats.

SST is now strategically placed to take advantage of opportunities to tender for the provision of services for ex-offenders for Local Authorities under Local Area Agreements, and for Her Majesty's Prison Service and Probation Services as a result of Government initiative to encourage the participation of the voluntary sector in the provision of Public Services. It remains to be seen whether we will be successful in persuading particular authorities that our way of working is cost effective. Plans for the near future include using our expertise and experience to establish hostels for women and Persistent Prolific Offenders.

We have good working relationships with all our statutory partners at the moment and we trust that this will continue long into the future for the benefit of the ex-offenders who seek our help.

Mick Holloway

BEYOND THE WALL HMP WORMWOOD SCRUBS

PETE PHASE 1 IN PRISON

“I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak . . .” (Ezekiel 34:16).

Those who have been behind bars, know what it is like to feel lost, strayed, injured and weak. Beyond the Wall advocates for the lost, seeks to bring back the strayed, binds up wounds of the injured and builds up the weak so that they may become strong.

The average prisoner makes 800 decisions per day. As they walk through the gate, over 8,000 decisions are waiting to be made in the first day of their release! We help men prepare for their release while behind the prison gate through providing a home, sorting out healthcare issues, advising on job opportunities, teaching financial management, encouraging them to face addiction, and whenever possible, reconnecting them with family. We work with many organisations and agencies inside and out of prison to ensure the men are receiving the highest quality of care.

Our team at HMP Wormwood Scrubs builds relationships inside the prison as Melissa and Jason work as case workers getting to the **root of the problem** by caring for the needs of the ‘whole man.’

Patrick leads our **outreach programme**, continuing the relationship beyond the gates, advocating for men at Homeless Persons Units, job centres and other authorities across London as he uses his extensive knowledge of housing law to set up the men for success.

Amanda Holiday oversees the whole project as project manager, and works diligently to expand the programme and ensure that there is a high quality of care by upholding our success that not one of the prisoners has slept on the street his first night out.

Pete was a familiar face in HMP Wormwood Scrubs, frequently going in and out of prison charged with domestic violence.

Originally from Poland, Pete settled in England after a divorce from his wife left him unsettled, depressed and with nowhere to go. At his lowest moments, Pete relied on alcohol to ease his pain, using the majority of his money to support his drinking habit. In a relationship with an English woman, a dual dependence on alcohol developed and caused tension over money, this led to accusations of domestic violence that Pete denies being guilty of to this day.

As Pete came in and out of prison, he quickly became familiar with the difficulties of resettlement when a variety of organisations failed to help him find accommodation. When he received an ultimatum from the judge saying, “If I ever see your face in court again, I will sentence you to many years,” Pete knew it was time for change.

Through a connection with a fellow prisoner, Pete decided to ring Stepping Stones because he heard that we are “honest, good people.”

Stepping Stones was delighted to work with Pete, meeting him at the gate on his release day, and providing him with immediate accommodation. After the first tenancy agreement did not work out, Pete moved into one of our own hostels and is showing amazing signs of change.

“Pete is doing above and beyond what we ask of him,” explains his keyworker Patrick. “I want to change my life,” adds Pete.

Improving his English is Pete’s next goal, and Stepping Stones is currently helping him to enrol on an English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) course as it will open opportunities for Pete in the future.

LETTER FROM A HOPE HOUSE RESIDENT

HOPE HOUSE

A colleague in another organisation recently described the type of offender given accommodation at Hope House as the most challenging group to work with while trying to reduce reoffending rates. He based his comments on studies which demonstrate that males with no attachments have the least amount of influences that contribute to stability, acting as incentives to break the cycle of crime. At Hope House, we seek to be that stable environment to many who pass through our doors.

With this as the backdrop, it is obvious that many of our residents feel very alone and desperate for any type of security that knocks on their door. We provide a safe place to come, where the men can be part of a group, learning, growing and changing together.

The REFA Plus programme has seen a lot of resident participation as discussions on

topics of relationships, education, finance, accommodation, self image, dealing with hurts and addiction take place on a weekly basis. Drawing men into the spiritual source of change in each of these areas is a challenging task, yet seeds are sown as men witness answers to prayer.

We give thanks that unplanned departures are a rare occurrence and helping men to move on to independent accommodation has been pointed out as a success by Croydon Council officers who are particularly impressed by our ability to access the private housing market.

Each resident has a unique background, deals with a variety of hurts and has very specific needs, which keep staff on their toes, knowing that we must approach each man differently and respond appropriately with freshness as we show ex offenders that there is hope of a better life, a life free from crime.

Letter from a current resident at Hope House

Damian writes:

I have only been a resident at Stepping Stones for three weeks but already it is proving to be a nice place. The staff here are very friendly and helpful. Whenever you need something or ask them something they will always do their best to help you. I am currently on a REFA course which they do and it helps with getting back to work, emotional issues, and consequences of behaviour leading to offending and what sort of things would be the likely causes of wanting to get into these sorts of situations.

They offer you help and guidance in emotional and actual behaviour that cause you to offend. You might be doing things wrong which cause you to become liable to offend and the REFA course

suggest ways and point out ways to do things that would help and keep you on the straight and narrow which is a good thing, I think.

Life skills are also a big thing here and are encouraged within day to day living. There is a curfew but I don't mind that. It's not embarrassingly early, it's alright, I can live with it. There's also rules to the house, things that we need to do and abide by in order to sustain our residency and make our life here warning letter free and challenge and hassle free.

You are encouraged to do household chores. I am doing a Keywork course at Stepping Stones which is a course offering people of residence an offer of finding more permanent accommodation and moving on in life. The rooms are nicely presented it is an all round nice place. I have enjoyed my time at Stepping Stones since my arrival.



BRIDGE HOUSE

RICHARD PHASE 2 IN ONE OF OUR HOSTELS

As those convicted of sex offences are viewed as predators, society is scared to welcome them into neighbourhoods or employ them in even the most mundane jobs. Most of these men have held well paid jobs, were part of normal family life and had a stable future ahead of them.

After lengthy sentences, intense treatment and coming to grips with their offence, the long awaited release comes. Many are shocked to realise, as a current resident explains, that a sex offender's sentence is never spent. For the rest of their lives they are classed as a dangerous risk to society. Bridge House aims to support these men as they struggle to move forward, find work and reconnect in the community.

We continue to see success while working with a variety of men from diverse backgrounds who are taking steps to rebuild their lives. Men feeling isolated, paranoid and worthless are common issues Bridge House staff are privileged to assist with on a daily basis. We also provide our residents with support in practical issues including stability in accommodation, financial management and accepting responsibility for their own actions, taking small steps towards living independently. We are glad to work in partnership with the police, probation, medical professionals and job centres as they see an increasing need for supportive homes like ours, which are will-

ing to tackle the difficult issues in order to lead men in a life free from crime.

Bridge House is not only a hostel, but a home. It is a joy to serve men by showing them love and hospitality and to see residents and former residents caring for each other. Thus the Bridge House family is continually extending by learning the essential truth that "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)



Coming through our doors as a declared agnostic, Richard decided that he would give this Christian based hostel a try so he would have a safe place to lay his head. After serving a long sentence in three different prisons, Richard knew that he had many transitions and challenges ahead of him upon release.

"About a year before my release, I spoke with probation to make sure they were sorting out a place for me to go when I got out. I continued approaching them, but when it was six weeks to my release and I still had nowhere to go I got a little impatient," describes Richard. "I finally was connected to a NACRO worker who often referred guys to Stepping Stones. She warned me that it was a Christian hostel, but assured me that they would not bother me about it too much," he chuckles.

Richard has now been involved with Stepping Stones for 13 months and is excited to be moved on to his own flat soon. Since living in the hostel, Richard has become a Christian through seeing the example of staff, reading the Word and seeing the power of prayer at work and is now actively involved in a local church, convincing everyone involved that God is at work.

Richard comments that, "Stepping Stones has helped give me a sense of purpose and has given me an opportunity to use my skills." Richard is a great blessing to Stepping Stones, volunteering on a regular basis, doing practical work in the hostels, using his skills and gifts for the good of the community and Stepping Stones Trust.

STEVE PHASE 3 - MOVING TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

MOVE ON

The success of our programme hinges on the fact that we do not leave men, who want their lives to change, out on the streets to fend for themselves. We provide long lasting support geared towards meeting practical, emotional and spiritual needs throughout the resettlement process.

Caring for the unique needs of vulnerable men in this holistic way requires wisdom, patience, perseverance and commitment of our staff who desire to walk alongside our residents, encouraging positive change in their lives.

It is an essential step for our residents to go from living in a hostel to sharing accommodation with one or two other people. Stepping Stones Trust obtained our first move-on accommodation in January 2007. Since then, the programme has grown from two beds to sixteen beds in six different properties, emphasising the need of this facility and success of our

programme. Creating a plan to obtain new property is a difficult task that keeps our Operations Manager, Alastair Bulley, busy and on his toes.

It is a joy to see ex offenders gaining self-confidence and independence, seeking employment, and forming healthy relationships while in our move-on property. Although there are many encouraging success stories, difficulties and challenges are faced each day as some men deal with this transition easier than others. Barry Attwell offers floating support to men, approaching each situation with renewed wisdom as he seeks to lead men who are in need to live independently.

Please pray for our move-on team as we work hard to secure more accommodation and provide our residents with quality, lasting support as they seek to restore their lives and turn their backs on their former lives of crime.

Inside and out of prison, Steve has always had a desire to help people, giving back what he can to the community. Living by the mantra that 'Everything happens for a reason,' Steve takes life as it comes, always looking for an opportunity to help his neighbour. Meeting guys as they came from courts into prison, Steve served as a mentor, ensuring fellow prisoners that they were going to survive. Also serving as a listener with the Samaritans, Steve visited prisoners at their lowest point to offer support and a word of encouragement. He explains that, "Helping other people helped me to survive in prison."

With his sentence coming to an end, Steve phoned Stepping Stones, getting the number from a fellow prisoner who was also applying for accommodation. Coming to Stepping Stones, Steve was thankful for a place to lay his head, but otherwise did not need intense support. "I really have not needed that much extra support," explains Steve, as he has moved onto Phase 3 accommodation quickly and is on his way to living independently. Barry, Steve's key worker, chimes in to affirm that, "there are not many Steve's."

As his goal of living independently draws closer, Steve is driven to develop an employment agency to help ex offenders find a job upon release. Securing a job is one of the most challenging tasks faced when released from prison, and Steve desires to provide help.

Although Steve does not desire to take advantage of all the support Stepping Stones has to offer, he affirms his floating support worker saying that, "Barry is always there to help people. If I ever needed Barry for anything, he would be there, which is comforting."



BEYOND THE WALL: HMP BELMARSH

“Be strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience.” (Col 1:11) Patience has been the overarching word surrounding this project as it has taken a year to begin from the initial negotiations to the time where staff first began work within the prison gates. Many prayers have surrounded this project, trusting that God’s timing is perfect and his plan for BtW within the walls of HMP Belmarsh is good.

We are excited to introduce our newest project as we set foot into another prison, increasing the number of men we are able to reach on a daily basis. Modelling our project in HMP Wormwood Scrubs, BtW has proven effective and we rejoice to have the opportunity to use this model to encourage men at HMP Belmarsh that they can have lives free from crime.

We give thanks as we witness answers to many prayers and see diligent work come to fruition. BtW in HMP Belmarsh began on 1 October with Rachel, the project manager, and Keith, the caseworker, anxious to get started.

As office space gets sorted, a Service Level Agreement (SLA) is approved and staff receive training, we continue to look to the Lord to shape this project as we seek his wisdom to reach a new clientele of men who want to turn their backs on a former life of crime as we open a door to long lasting change for these offenders.

As BtW Belmarsh begins to have influence in the prison, pray that staff will have wisdom in carrying this project forward and offenders will desire to use our programme as they prepare to be released. We trust that accommodation will be provided, jobs will become available and many lives of ex offenders will be transformed!



KEN PHASE 4 COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT

For Ken, Stepping Stones Trust has given him opportunities and confidence to re-settle into society as he is now working full-time and living independently in his own flat.

Ken came to Stepping Stones with a renewed faith and hope for a successful future. As he came through Hope House, Ken describes that “It became ‘Home House’ for me as it provided me with the initial return to reality after prison.”

Being fit to move on to his own flat, Ken took over a flat in which another ex offender had formerly lived. “I am grateful to Stepping Stones for paying my first month’s rent and deposit on a loan basis, which I have now fully paid back. It is truly independent living.”

As Ken forges his way back into a working life and connects with a local church community, he still feels he is continually atoning for his crime as his career, past relationships and finances have all been

affected. Despite these setbacks, Ken is now working in Croydon, developing new friendships, and creating a better life and a hopeful future.

Ken feels that his life has been renewed and that Stepping Stones Trust has provided him with the ‘stepping stones’ needed to achieve his goals. He now enjoys serving on the Parochial Church Council at his local church and hopes eventually to retire to the country to enjoy the rest of his life peacefully.



SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS FUNDRAISING

Summarised statement of financial activities for the year to 31 March 2008

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2008 Total £	2007 Total £
Total Incoming Resources	369,271	140,592	509,863	540,121
Total Resources Expended	(485,926)	(141,760)	(627,686)	(489,927)
Increase/(Decrease) in funds	(116,655)	(1,168)	(117,823)	50,194
Fund Balances at 1 April	238,626	114,064	352,690	302,496
Fund Balances at 31 March	121,971	112,896	234,867	352,690

Summarised Account Balances at 31 March 2008

	2008 Total £	2007 Total £
Fixed Assets	190,441	194,384
Current Assets	52,312	38,133
Cash in bank and in hand	83,731	241,872
Less: creditors due within one year	(59,602)	(79,748)
Less: creditors due after one year	(32,015)	(41,951)
	234,867	352,690

Trustees' Statement

These summarised financial statements are a summary of information extracted from the audited financial statements, on which the auditors' opinion was unqualified. The full report and financial statements were approved by the trustees on 24th July 2008 and have been submitted to the Charity Commission and the Registrar of Companies. These summarised financial statements may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. For further information the full financial statements, the report of the auditors and the report of the trustees should be consulted. Copies of these may be obtained from the office at Suffolk House, George Street, Croydon, CR0 1PE or on our website.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees: Peter Denison 21 August 2008

Independent auditors' statement

As auditors of the charity, we have reviewed the summarised financial statements above and consider that they are consistent with the full financial statements on which we gave our opinion.

Armstrong & Co, Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors 21 August 2008
4a Printing House Yard, Hackney Road, London, E2 7PR

Huge thanks to each trust, church and individual who has supported Stepping Stones Trust this past year through monetary gifts and consistent prayer. Your donations provide a quarter of our income, so without your generous support we would not be able to move our projects forward. We also see growth and funding supplied as result of your prayers!

We have been encouraged by two good years of fundraising. The total raised for 2006-07 totalled £245,481, made up of £156,300 (restricted) and £89,181 (unrestricted). For 2007-08, the trust raised £194,603 comprised of £140,592 (restricted) and £54,011 (unrestricted).

Getting BtW Belmarsh started has proven to be a test of our perseverance and patience. Huge thanks to **The Lankelly Foundation** and **The Charles Hayward Foundation** who have persevered with us and given a secure base to begin this work. We are currently looking to secure funds for the next two years so this project can have a solid foundation to stand on.

Continued thanks to the following supporters who have contributed faithfully during this period.

Church Urban Fund

The City Parochial Foundation

The Wates Foundation

Lloyds TSB Foundation

St Marks Church, Battersea Rise

New Life Christian Centre, Croydon

We are looking to expand and develop our mentoring programme in the coming year as we recruit new volunteers and improve the structure of the programme, which is dependant on funding. Many thanks go out to the Church Urban Fund and Allchurches Trust who are making these expansions possible.

More thanks to HMP Wormwood Scrubs, and Croydon and Wandsworth Councils for their ongoing support of our work.

Future Projects

We are in the early stages of beginning a Social Enterprise programme to answer the challenge of ex offenders being employed after their release. Our aim is to equip men in practical ways in order for them to take further steps towards independence.

We are always grateful for general funds for our residents and offenders. If you would like to give to a more specific project, we would love donations towards BtW HMP Belmarsh, mentoring, outreach work, training and our upcoming social enterprise programme.

STAFF

(from April 2007 until March 2008)

Tia Allali (June 07-Sept 07)
Sariya Allen (from Nov 07)
Patrick Anderson
Barry Attwell
Paul Baker (from March 08)
Rachel Barker (from Oct 07)
Rory Bruce (until Sept 07)
Alastair Bulley
David Christie (until Oct 07)
James Creed
Amanda Holiday (from Oct 07)
Mick Holloway (CEO)
Michael Jaques
Emmanuel King (until Oct 07)
Bill London
Rachel McKemey (Oct 07-Nov 07)
Rosanne Morris
Pedro Pereira
Nigel Prior
Roland Richardson (until Sept 07)
Melissa Samuel
Mary Sewell
Katherine Shuttleworth (from July 07)
Veronica Tagoe
Khumbu Tshuma
Henrietta Usherwood (until Dec 07)

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