

Issue 15 - Winter 2018
The magazine for Home-Start supporters

Family Matters

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START

Support and friendship
for families

Fighting Loneliness this Christmas

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Marathon
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in London

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welcome

It is hard to believe that we are almost at the end of 2018. But so much has happened this year.

I was delighted to be able to join Home-Start Camden as they celebrated expanding their work into the neighbouring borough and becoming Home-Start Camden & Islington.

It can be very difficult for Home-Starts to find the funding to carry out their work with families, which is why it is important to recognise that across the country many Home-Starts are expanding their work.

It has also been striking that this year there has been a new focus on the devastating impact that loneliness has on people.

Working with parents experiencing loneliness and isolation has been a central part of Home-Start volunteers' work for over four decades, so it is good news that there is new political focus on how we can all work to reduce it.

We were pleased to be able to join the Loneliness Action Group to help add the voice of families to the discussions between the national organisations working in this area.

Home-Start have also begun working with the British Red Cross to support young mums who are experiencing loneliness.

We are very grateful for the support that has been given to Home-Start by our many funders and supporters, but especially from



Dunelm whose support this year has been magnificent.

This is only with your support that we can work with families. It means we can help parents and their children with the challenges they face in local communities around the country. It also means we can make sure that struggling families don't get forgotten when important issues are discussed.

This is why our Snowflake Appeal for Children is so important.

So, whether you support Home-Start's work in your local community, or our work supporting families right across the UK, you will be transforming the lives of children and their parents.

Thank you.

Rob Parkinson

Chief Executive of Home-Start UK

Inside family matters

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Home-Start expand work into Islington

HOME-START CAMDEN officially launched their work into the neighbouring borough of Islington, and celebrated becoming Home-Start Camden & Islington in October.

Home-Start first began working in Islington in 1996 but financial pressures meant that it was forced to close its doors in 2015.

Anne Darlington, manager of Home-Start Camden & Islington said, "We are very pleased to have officially launched our work in Islington today. It is great that once again Home-Start will be working in the borough with families who need our support now more than ever before. Thank you to everyone who came to celebrate with us especially our wonderful volunteers without whom we would not be here."

Dunelm Partnership raises over £600,000 for Home-Start

DUNELM HAS ANNOUNCED that they have raised over £600,000 for Home-Start during our partnership.

This year, many members of the Dunelm team ran fundraising weekends in stores to help raise money to support families in the local community.

It is still the case that Home-Starts have to turn away thousands of families each year due to lack of funding, but the good news is that this year Home-Start have been able to reach hundreds more families and change the lives of hundreds more children.

Only one of Me

ALMOST 50 LOCAL Home-Starts have benefitted from donations of an important new children's book that helps parents explain death and terminal illness to children.

The book is written by Lisa Wells who, when she was diagnosed with terminal cancer, decided to create a book for her daughters and to help other families in the same situation. Lisa wrote the book with the excellent children's author Michelle Robinson. There are two versions of the book, one featuring a father and one a mother. Both have been illustrated by top illustrators.

The author and the publishers, Graffeg, carried out a crowd funding campaign to enable copies to be distributed to charities working with children to help families who maybe going through this difficult time.



Frank Field MP - "Home-Start Has always been brilliant"

THE IMPORTANCE OF Home-Start's life-changing work featured in the letters page of the Guardian during October.

In response to a letter from the MP, Frank Field, which called for new investment in home visiting support, the newspaper published replies from across the UK as well as from Home-Start UK.

The letters highlighted the established work of Home-Starts over the past four decades, and the struggles they are overcoming in the face of local authority cuts.

In reply, Frank Field, wrote, "Home-Start has always been a brilliant and often overlooked programme... It works with parents in their own home, which can only be good for children as well as the parents' happiness and sense of wellbeing and value."

FOCUS ON FIGHTING Loneliness

Home-Start and British Red Cross launch partnership

HOME-START UK ARE working with the British Red Cross, supported by the Co-op and British Red Cross' partnership to help tackle loneliness, to reduce loneliness in young mums.

Home-Starts right across the country are running groups for young mums, and in each community the mums are shaping what support is given and what they do each week.

The new groups have been set up by Home-Starts in Angus; Caerphilly; Crawley, Horsham and West Sussex; Croydon; Ealing; Glasgow; Oldham, Stockport and Tameside; Kirklees; Knowsley; Wirral and York.

Research by the Co-op and the British Red Cross has shown while all new mothers can feel a sense of isolation, it is felt most acutely by younger mothers. Almost half (49 per cent) of mothers aged between 18 and 25 are often or always lonely.

"Trapped in a Bubble", previous groundbreaking research by the Co-op and British Red Cross, identified that becoming a young mother was one of the life-changing events that can trigger loneliness. However it was one of the least likely to be recognised as an at risk group by the general public.

Vivien Waterfield, Home-Start UK Deputy CEO said: "Having a baby changes your life in so many ways – and it can be a really lonely time, especially for younger mums when

they don't have networks of support around them. It can have a huge impact on their mental health and wellbeing. The number of mums telling us they are lonely or isolated has been increasing in recent years to almost 1 in 2 of all mums using Home-Start services.

"Younger mums often tell us that they're reluctant to use existing services because of fear of being judged, which is why this collaboration with the Co-op and Red Cross to develop a range of new groups and activities that are especially for young parents is so important."

Paul Gerrard, Group Policy and Campaigns Director at the Co-op, said: "People do not think of young mothers as being susceptible to being lonely but our research clearly highlights that it is a major problem.

"That is why we are delighted that Home-Start, with its specialist expertise in this area, will be helping lonely parents through its community support groups."

Zoë Abrams, Executive Director of Communications and Advocacy at British Red Cross, said: "Helping people feel better-connected in their communities and responding quickly when loneliness first takes hold is vital to reduce the serious impact felt by people. We're proud to be working with Home-Start on a new project focused on supporting young parents."



"I felt really isolated when I had my baby"

SHANNON IS 20 and has just had her second baby. She had her first son when she had recently turned 18. Being a young mum can be a lonely experience, especially if you don't have close family around to support you.

This is why Home-Start Kirklees runs a special group, just for young mums, each week in Dewsbury.

"I felt really isolated when I had my baby," says Shannon. "I didn't really go out of the house, because I didn't really know anybody."

After she had her baby, Shannon found that most of her friends distanced themselves from her. She had a new baby, no one to talk to, and was scared of leaving the house.

That's when Shannon first found out about Home-Start.

Shannon knew that her isolation was having a big impact on her son too. "It's not fair on the kids as well. If you're isolated and you're not going out, then how are the kids supposed to learn?"

Angie, the group organiser visits each mum at home and lets them know about the group and the other ways that Home-Start can help them.

For the first few weeks Angie will offer to pick up new young mums and take them to



the group to make sure they get there and know a friendly face when they walk through the door. It removes a big barrier stopping mums from coming for that first time.

"If Angie hadn't come out to visit me I wouldn't have come to Home-Start at all," says Shannon. "I was really scared just to go out of the house, I had really low self-confidence".

Mums chat about everything from haircuts, to where to buy the best baby clothes, to relationship advice, to tips on feeding.

"If it wasn't for Home-Start I wouldn't be the person I am today," she explains. "I would still be isolated. My confidence has gone through the roof. It's amazing. I'm a completely different person to what I was before."

Loneliness Action Group

Home-Start UK attended the latest working meeting of the Loneliness Action Group on Thursday 1 November.

The group, chaired by the British Red Cross, is made up of charities, trade associations, professional bodies, unions and representatives from government and

academia who are all working on reducing loneliness.

The meeting followed the launch of the government's loneliness strategy in which Home-Start ensured that becoming a parent was recognised as something that can cause loneliness.



"We Had to
Learn to be
Parents, We
Didn't Have
to Learn to
be blind"

Hetal and Will have both been blind since childhood. But it was when they had children that those new challenges meant they needed the support of Home-Start Greenwich.

"We are used to being independent," says Will. "And we still are with the kids, but there are just some things, to make sure the kids have the best situation growing up, that a Home-Start volunteer can make a huge difference to."

"We've been blind nearly all of our lives," says Will. "We're used to it. We're good at being blind".

Hetal adds, "We had to learn to be parents, we didn't have to learn to be blind."

Their volunteer, Carole has helped Will and Hetal to be more confident being active with the children, helping them to ride bikes, or visit places they hadn't been to before.

Now, as their eldest is at school, Carol is able to help him with is reading and writing.

"As he's started school Carol's read with him, and done writing with him," says

Hetal. "Because, with the best will in the world, I can't correct his handwriting. I don't have any sight, and neither does Will. This is stuff we can't help with, and we desperately, desperately want to."

Hetal adds, "We want to support our children's education. I would feel terrible if we didn't have Carol, I would feel Jordan was missing out on his handwriting and reading because we can't see. Because he doesn't deserve that."

Every family supported by Home-Start is unique, and volunteers adapt their support to meet the needs of the family.

"With the best will in the world, people can't understand what it is like to be blind," says Hetal. "But to be able to go and shop for my son's party bags, and write invitations and thank-you cards, that's freedom for me. That's being something a lot of sighted people take for granted."

You can listen to Hetal and Will tell their story in one of our podcasts. Find them at home-start.org.uk/home-start-podcast



Snowflakes are falling

Hundreds of families come to Home-Start every day who need the life changing support of a Home-Start volunteer.

In each of these families there are children whose lives are changed forever by the support they receive.

Increasingly families are facing more pressures and Home-Start may be the last chance many families have for support.

That is why Home-Start's annual Snowflake Appeal for children is so important.

We want to make sure Home Starts are able to help families in more areas of the country. We want to make sure that Home-Starts have more volunteers, so they never have to turn a family away.

Between November 1st and January 31st we are asking you to put on events, make a donation or buy one of our Snowflake Appeal gifts.



How you can get involved

■ MAKE A DONATION

Any gift you give will make a big difference to our work. It is quick, safe and secure to make a gift through our website at

www.snowflake.org.uk.

Or you can send a donation by post to Home-Start, The Crescent, King Street, Leicester, LE1 6RX.

If you want to support a Home-Start in your area you can get in touch with them directly.

■ BECOME A FUNDRAISER

There are so many ways you can help to raise money for our Snowflake Appeal.

Our fundraising pack has ideas for raising money at home, school or work, as well as tips for how to make the most of what you do.

You can download our fundraising pack at www.snowflake.org.uk.

■ SNOWFLAKE GIFTS

Give a Christmas gift that makes a difference this Christmas. We have Snowflake gifts available on our website www.snowflake.org.uk.

We also have a fantastic range of Christmas cards, with five new designs. But there are only a limited number of each, so don't miss out.

You can order them now at www.snowflake.org.uk.

THANK-YOU to our 2018 fundraisers!

London Marathon 2018

Massive congratulations and huge thank you to all our Home-Start runners who took part in 2018's London Marathon – the biggest and hottest London Marathon ever.

Despite soaring temperatures, our team really did us proud. Together they have

raised over £14,000 which will help us continue our vital work supporting vulnerable families.

A Big Thank You to our team - Sam Park, Jess Ford, James Farnham, Sam Park, Chantelle Hoal, James Fleetwood and Elizabeth Walker.



Snowdonia Trek Area 4

With breath-taking views and rugged scenery a group from Dunelm Area 4 took up the challenge to trek Snowdonia. Their challenge was a great success and raised approximately £6,400.

Conquering the Three Peaks Challenge

A big thank you to Alex Mussell, Dan Hawthorne, Lily Bland and Abi Whitehead all from Dunelm York who took part in the three Peaks Challenge of climbing Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike, and Mount Snowdon in 24 hours to help raise funds for Home-Start UK.

They hit their target and raised £1602.28 with additional match-funding of £500.



Prudential Ride 100

Huge congratulations and thank you to all the cyclists who completed Prudential RideLondon this year.

Our Prudential RideLondon Team were David Shaw, Martin Clarke, Paul Jackson, Jamie Gillespie, Andrew Burgess, Wayne Lawrence, Ryan Hillier, Andrew Murray and Danni Slater.

All our cyclists have raised vital funds to support our work and we cannot thank them enough.

If you feel inspired and would like take part in a challenge event 2019, then please contact Stephanie Henderson-Barrett at shenderson-barrett@home-start.org.uk