

# NEWSLETTER

# Elizabeth Fry

Approved Premises for Women

Patron: The Rt. Hon. The Baroness Corston

The Staff, Residents and Trustees welcome you to share our news update at Elizabeth Fry

Winter 2012

## Building Improvements

After the reopening of the Elizabeth Fry building in July 2011 it was felt necessary to expand and provide the staff and residents with much needed space in which to eat, live and work. Building work is now well under way to extend the lounge and create extra room that will be used by the residents for group and individual sessions, for spiritual worship or quiet reflection, all so very important in the hectic daily routine of Hostel life.

Whilst we have received some generous donations towards the costs of the building works we are still a way off our target. Any financial donations towards our projects would be gratefully received to ensure we are able to complete to the highest standards.

## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations

To commemorate the move of the Elizabeth Fry Hostel to Reading in 1962 we enjoyed two great events with our friends and supporters.

An Open Day was held at the Hostel in July where the staff and women put a great deal of work into showing off what life is like on a day-to-day basis. Visitors were given tours of the premises, tasters of group sessions, drug and alcohol testing and the chance to sample some of the newly learnt cooking skills taught to the residents by members of the WI.

In October, Greyfriars Church, Reading hosted a Service of Thanksgiving for the work of the Hostel. We were delighted to be joined on this joyful occasion by many dignitaries from Reading and many of our friends and supporters, staff and residents past and present. Guest of honour was Marjorie Griffin, aged 100, who was the first Manager of Elizabeth Fry in Reading.



Marjorie Griffin and EF Manager Fiona Titcomb

The service was led by Canon Rev Jonathan Wilmot, and the address was given by Deputy Chair of Trustees Andrew Storch who organised the occasion.

## Cooking with the WI

Members from WI Federations in Berkshire donned their aprons and ran a six-week cookery course at the Hostel this year. The course was the first of its kind to be run, part of the WI Community Cookery Scheme that aims to teach people to cook and shop for their families.

Over the course the women made soup, explored all the meals you can get from a cooked chicken, looked at budgeting and planning their meals, as well as plenty of sweet treats from pavlovas to cup cakes. The residents also completed an online course in food safety and hygiene.



As this was the first course of its kind, there was an interesting article written about the course in the WI Life magazine featuring some of the stories of the residents and their experiences in the Hostel and on the course.

## Thank you to our supporters

In these ever challenging financial times the donations we receive from all our supporters are increasingly essential for us to be able to provide the best level of service to the residents at Elizabeth Fry. We would like to thank for work on our extension: LankellyChase Foundation, Rank Foundation, St Jude's Charity, Clothworkers' Foundation. We are most grateful to the Feoffees of St Michael at the Northgate, Oxford, for a donation towards the salary of our counsellor, Ann Collins, whose integrative approach of counselling and coaching supports the women by preparing them for reintegration into the community.

## Residents' Stories

As part of the 50th Anniversary celebrations the residents of the hostel put together a magazine to tell a little more about themselves, explore some of the things they were learning at the premises, along with some jokes, quizzes and poems.

Some of the stories that were included give an interesting picture about life at the Hostel, how it feels to move in and what type of experiences the residents have. Here is one article written by a then resident:

### Moving On

After being recalled due to smoking cannabis and inappropriate behaviour I was devastated. I really thought I was picking my life up and doing well, in fact I was in denial. It was only after going back to prison that I made this realization. After having time to reflect and completing a B.S.R programme (Building Skills for Recovery). I learnt so many things about all kinds of drugs and their long term effects. I was horrified and it really made me think about changing my life for the better. I worked really hard in preparation to being released.

I am now at Elizabeth Fry and doing really well. I like the structure of the groups in the morning, prior to coming I like the thought of cooking and cleaning and being part of the hostel community. We also do evening activities which include quizzes, Bingo, Karaoke. Great fun! This brings us all together.

I have been out of prison now for 3 months and achieving a great deal. I have attended plenty of groups including Health and Wellbeing, Addictions & Relationships, Communication & Interpersonal skills, and Sexual Health. I have learnt so much and continue to learn every day.

I have not been this positive in a long time and I know that I will achieve my goals. These are to find a flat and a job. I am looking forward to a nicer and brighter future, there is light at the end of the tunnel and I can reach it.



EFAP manager, Fiona Titcomb, talking with a resident

## Looking Forward

We, at Elizabeth Fry, are rightly proud of our services and interventions; informal feedback from residents confirms this view. However, there is always scope for improvement and, as ever, we are keen to continue to develop our work. Our intention is to build on good practice and adopt an evidence-based approach.

With this in mind, we are planning a research project to explore many aspects of the hostel with emphasis, particularly, on the aims of the charity: to protect the public and reduce the likelihood of reoffending. The work will be undertaken by an independent researcher and the findings presented as a case study. The latter will inform Elizabeth Fry Trustees and management in terms of future planning as well, we hope, be of benefit to the wider approved premises community and offender rehabilitation more generally.

We are currently seeking financial support for this project and all donations are warmly welcomed.

## How you can support us

We appreciate any help and support both through financial donations and through assistance with our work.

Are you able to offer us time, could you be a mentor, help with fundraising, assist with legal matters?

Are you connected to a Trust or Foundation? Please let us know if our work fits your giving criteria.

Do you know a company that has a Corporate Responsibility Programme? Could you interest them in helping us in our work? Would they like to help through donations in kind?

You can help with a financial donation by sending a cheque to the address below or online at

[http://localgiving.com/charity/  
ElizabethFryApprovedPremises](http://localgiving.com/charity/ElizabethFryApprovedPremises)

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The localgiving.com "Grow Your Tenner" fund still has just over £100,000 to be claimed. If you can donate £10 via our local giving website at the web address shown above, we will receive an additional £10 in matched funding. If you would like to give £10 every month, the first £30 will be matched. Add in Gift Aid and your initial £30 donation becomes £67.50.