



Cheltenham Open Door

*A local charity working to relieve poverty, hardship
and social or emotional distress*

Charity Registration No.1063434

Company Registration No.3379241

News from No 39

Summer 2010

Winner of the Charles Irving Memorial Award 2009

We were delighted and enormously proud when our work with disadvantaged people was recognised by the Charles Irving Charitable Trust and we were awarded the Charles Irving Memorial Award for 2009. The Trust, based in Charlton Kings, supports community projects working with people with disabilities, mental health issues and local elderly people. Trustee Jacky Lane, speaking at the presentation ceremony in March 2010, recalled our very early days when Sir Charles Irving was alive and said she knew ours was the sort of charitable enterprise he would want to support. Mrs Lane said: "It was a hard decision this year but we are very impressed with Cheltenham Open Door. We are rewarding the charity in recognition of its continued support to vulnerable and disadvantaged people."

A generous cheque for £10,000 was presented at a special ceremony at our Grosvenor Street centre. We intend to spend at least half on giving the premises at No 39 a face-lift. The window frames are rotting and must be replaced and the frontage is looking very tired and needs attention to smarten it up and make it more attractive and welcoming. We are so grateful for this opportunity to improve the building and have already held a preliminary meeting with architect Richard Stanley of Stanley Partnership. The remainder of the award will go towards annual running costs, particularly all-important items such as food and utility bills.

Our 2009 Christmas shelter

We have come a long way since our first Christmas shelter in Cheltenham in 1992. For the past 12 years we have had the good fortune to be able to use St Luke's Church Hall to offer four days of respite from loneliness, poverty and social or emotional distress to some of Cheltenham's most vulnerable people. In addition, in 2009 our new off-site storage premises proved invaluable at this busy time.

We were pleased to offer our guests, aged between 18 and 93, meals, clothing, showers and toiletries, entertainment, a bed for the night for those sleeping rough and food parcels to take away.

One of the guests told the *Gloucestershire Echo* "Most people associate Christmas with celebrating but for lots of us it can be quite a miserable time. This place gives us somewhere warm to come and enjoy some company over a nice meal. We're very grateful."

The important chiropody service, which has been available at the shelter for many years through the kind help of chiropodist Lorraine Monck, was much in demand again, and this year we also introduced hairdressing. There was a queue for the free haircuts offered by hairdresser Simon Lewis, which gave a real lift to people's spirits.

Sincere thanks to everyone who gave donations - especially the kind person who gave the turkeys - and to all those who helped with the preparation, the shelter itself and the clearing up.

We are also very grateful for the interest and support of the local media, particularly the *Gloucestershire Echo* and BBC Radio Gloucestershire, which helped us reach a wider public than would otherwise have been possible.

Most of all, we are indebted to the vicar of St Luke's, the Rev Robert Pestell, and Jane and David Johnson, the hall administrators, for unfailing help and support.

Summer outing

Dennis Hewett, Sara Reader and Sheila Willis, who are at the centre of our day-to-day operations, are busy organising a day out this summer for all those who come to No 39 and also for our volunteers and staff. We are planning to travel by coach to the Cotswold Wildlife Park at Burford to spend a day in the extensive parkland there, enjoying the beautiful gardens and visiting their amazing collection of animals.

The thinking behind this new initiative is to enable our clients to escape for a little while from the depressing circumstances in which many of them find themselves, share a home-made picnic in lovely surroundings and feel they are amongst friends. Such things can be a small step to help people reconnect with the world they've slipped out of and we hope it will enable everyone to get to know each other better.

The team is already planning the sandwiches, fruit and cakes and there are promises of ice creams all round in the afternoon!

Thanks a million to everyone

We are indebted to many individual people, businesses, voluntary groups, churches and schools for donations throughout the year.

The large amounts of food that come in at harvest festival time, a year's supply of cleaning materials from a well-wisher, the goodies at Christmas from Kraft, Unilever and other organisations, a surplus fax machine from Wynne-Jones, Lainé & James, two trolley-loads of tinned food from customers at the Co-op store in Bath Road: such acts of kindness made a great difference.

We are particularly grateful for financial donations and as well as the Charles Irving Charitable Trust award mentioned overleaf, we should like to acknowledge the generosity of the local churches, the Spirax-Sarco Charitable Trust, the Trustees of the Mrs BVG Clarke Will Trust, Nancy Kenyon Charitable Trust, Gloucestershire Masonic Charity Association, Kraft Foods, Leeds Building Society Charitable Foundation, Suffolks Traders Association, Waitrose Community Matters and other organisations. The support of Cheltenham Borough Council is also much appreciated.

Time is a valuable gift these days and we couldn't manage without our loyal band of individual and corporate volunteers. Thank you for the valuable support of those who volunteer throughout the year at No 39 and the team from Kraft who organised our new storage premises.

Fundraising

The many ways in which supporters raise funds to help our work never cease to surprise us.

People have raised money on our behalf through a sponsored half marathon, coffee mornings and tea parties, open air carol-singing, Christmas concerts at schools and churches, office collections instead of sending Christmas cards to colleagues, a village pie and punch evening, raffles, harvest festival collections, collecting and recycling printer cartridges, morris dancing displays, bring and buy book sales, demonstration of handbell ringing, giving talks and donating the speaker's fee, and a quiz evening.

What a list! You're a terrific bunch!

Feedback

The views and suggestions of everyone involved with our charity are central to our operation and we consider with care the ideas they put forward.

The opinions of our service users are very important and this spring and summer we shall be conducting a survey of our clients through questionnaires and face to face interviews. We hope to gain valuable information on attendance patterns, use of our current facilities, need for professional advice and ways in which we could be of more help in the future. We shall also understand better the nature of our present client base: age range, ratio of males to females, and their current housing situation (whether sleeping rough, in a hostel, sofa surfing, etc.).

We also issue a questionnaire to our volunteers after each Christmas shelter in order to understand how we could improve the event in future years and identify people who wish to be involved more fully. Feedback after the 2009 shelter has been very positive: volunteers view this as a great opportunity to work together at a special time of year to help those less fortunate and they find it a worthwhile experience.

Where there's a will there's a way

Have you ever considered including a donation to Cheltenham Open Door in your will? After remembering their family and friends, some of our supporters have kindly left a legacy to benefit our charity as a lasting way to help us continue our caring work for the disadvantaged and needy. Every sum, no matter how small, is welcome. We rely almost entirely on what we are given by way of donations and grants and all our services to our users are free.

Your solicitor will explain the different ways to leave a gift and the inheritance tax advantages of a charitable bequest, and will also ensure that all legal formalities are correctly followed, whether you are making a new will or adding a bequest to an existing one. It will assist them if you supply the following information about our charity: Cheltenham Open Door (Registered Charity No.1063434) of 39 Grosvenor Street, Cheltenham GL52 2SQ.

Should you be kind enough to make a bequest to Cheltenham Open Door your support will be of great value to those who need our help in the future.

People

We should like to acknowledge the support of:

- our Patrons: Father Paul Brandon (Church of Sacred Hearts), Hon Ald Brian Cassin, Martin Horwood MP, Lord Jones of Cheltenham, John Keighley and John Miller.
- our Trustees (and Company Directors): Helen Harkness (Chair), Enid Attenborough, Jeanne Flanagan, Sam Guglani, Georgina Haynes, Brian Kearney, Andy Teague, Philip Warner and Sheila Willis. Three of these joined us during the year: Enid Attenborough, our Sunday Manager for many years; Sam Guglani, consultant oncologist at Cheltenham General Hospital and Sunday volunteer; and Georgina Haynes, who has a business background, is studying accounting and is a new Sunday volunteer.
- our Associates, who help run the charity: Derek Appleing, Lyn Gibbings, Dennis Hewett (Duty Manager) and Sara Reader (Assistant Manager).

Contacting us

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