

Youth Work... The Mail Out

17th Apr 2008

A time when everything appears to have been done with the time and volunteers that we have. At first the youth group appeared to be going great guns, you may have completed a Youth Alpha Course or set up a really exciting detached project. But then... where do we go from here? When I was in my last post (Holy Trinity Coventry) I hit one of those walls, we had done everything that we could think of and I was feeling stale. I'm now learning with my own post that this is the time when we need to get outside help, someone who looks at what we do and says 'Have you thought about trying this?'

As Diocesan Youth Officer, part of my role is to be that outside voice. Granted its far harder being engaged in the week in, week out, work than it is to be the ideas person but its a role I do enjoy doing. So.. if your feeling a little bit tired in your work, I would love to be invited along to come and see if I can assist you. You can contact me on 079 67 662 184 or greg.bartlem@covcofe.org

The following may be of some interest...

GPIG Youth Event Revolution

On Saturday 19th April from 7.30 (doors open at 7) at Immanuel Christian Centre, Greens Road, Keresley Coventry there is a very exciting youth event...

- Making a difference because Jesus did it first. The night will include Praise and Worship, Drama's Dance, Videos plus Games. They have a great new team of youth that have put a lot of effort into this event. Would be great to share it with you and your youth. Please contact Nathan if you have any questions or need more info.

nathan@gpig.org.uk www.gpig.org.uk

Mobile Youth Cafe

It exists! Today I visited our recently repainted and MOT'd brand new Mobile Youth Cafe. The vehicle is a former library van, which has been converted by Stewarts Coaches (Wellesbourne) into our new resource. Normally during the summer break I spend much of the holidays away on various camps with groups of young people... but not this year! I am really hoping that thsi coming summer, we will be able to take full advantage of our new cafe with drop-in youth clubs taking place all over the Diocese. Please be in touch if you want to book it for a block of time during the summer hols and I'll let you know the details. If we can put this resource to proper use I suspect that we will see a very exciting summer!

My Space

Keith Parr (The brilliant leader of the Coventry Cathedral Youth Team) has asked me to let people know that they now have their very own site.

Follow the enclosed link:www.myspace.com/covcathouthy

Iain Bruce (Rugby YFC) has been in touch to share the following exciting news with us all...

Tony Campolo speaking in Rugby

I thought I would give you the heads up on an event we have going on that might be of interest, on May 5th at St Matt's Rugby starting at 7 . We have Tony Campolo speaking. The event will have the elevate band playing Roy Crowne part hosting and is focusing on the hope 08 theme, Tony is also very keen to preach the Gospel so it should be a brill evening . It is bank holiday Monday but it also is Tony Campolo!!!. If you could help spread the word around I'm sure people won't be disappointed.

Could Your church do something like this? I asked Mick and Jan Ford (from St James Southam) to write me a few lines about their very original detached youth project. The following is well worth the read...

The Southam St James Granny Wagon

'What those lads need is a mug of hot chocolate each,' I thought to myself, not for the first time, when I saw the usual gang of youths outside the library. Several of them I recognised from their primary school days, and some acknowledged my greeting as I passed by. I kept thinking about this, on and off for months, but couldn't work out any plan, although I had the resources.

Once a week, during the racing season, I provided post-race refreshments for my husband's cycling club: plastic cups, flasks of hot water, milk, teabags, coffee and cake dished out from the back of my elderly Corsa hatchback, known in the family as the Granny Wagon, an oblique reference to both the driver and the passengers!

It was about 18 months later that I was sitting next to my friend Chris Cooke at the New Wine Women's Day at Wembley. We'd had a really good sing and were awaiting the first speaker, when she said to me 'I really think we should be doing something about the library posse!' 'We'll do the Granny Wagon!' I declared without a moment's hesitation.

By the time the lunch break was over, we'd got it sorted. All we had to do now was get the approval of John Armstrong, our priest-in-charge (and presumably the PCC though I don't remember that bit!) then do it. I was anxious to get going, but Chris had a much better plan. 'We'll do a prayer walk round the town first, and make sure we know Who's in charge!'

It was a bitterly cold March night when we met outside the supermarket, and began our march around the streets of Southam. We didn't actually encounter many youngsters at all, but as we approached the park, we could hear them - what a din! Shrieking, yelling, raucous laughter - 'I don't think we'll go in there, Chris,

we can pray from here on this bench!

We decided we'd start the following Friday - to the great encouragement and support of many of our congregation and the very great apprehension of our husbands. We pulled up in the Corsa by one of the entrances to the park, on a side road. It was still bitterly cold and the noise was as lively as the previous week. We both prayed fervently. Then Chris said 'Right, I'm going in!' We leapt out of the car, and as she disappeared through the gate, I got out my granny's old card table, a couple of flasks, cups and tub of hot chocolate - oh, and the pink wafer biscuits.

Four girls appeared: 'A woman said we could have some hot chocolate' was their rather puzzled opening. I got cracking: another little group, then a big group. 'Why are you doing this? Who sent you?' I grinned and pointed upwards. They looked puzzled. 'The congregation at St James Church are concerned about you, and we thought you might like some hot drinks.'

'That's really nice, Miss, someone ought to tell the Council about you!' A number of them were keen to make a donation, and when the police car drew up, a group of young lads encircled us protectively. I went across to the car and explained what was going on, to the somewhat bewildered officers. They declined our offer of a drink, but on subsequent evenings, the Community Police Support Officer has often had a cuppa.

That first evening we served one tea, one coffee and 49 hot chocolates (though I think some folk had seconds.) Chris and I were ecstatic - it was so exciting, and the response from the youngsters was overwhelming.

That was three years ago. We have a small but dedicated band of helpers, not all of whom are grannies and granddads, and we have missed only two Friday nights. When we arrived in the snow, there was a sizable group 'What on earth are you lot doing out on a night like this?' I enquired from inside the car 'Oh, we'd knew you'd be here' was the confident response. On several occasions, congregation members from neighbouring parishes have joined us to see what we're doing, and a number have begun similar ventures.

As the clientele changes over the course of the years, we still get asked 'Why are you doing this? Who pays - you don't get nothing for nothing!' Resisting the temptation to correct the double negative, we have the opportunity to explain, briefly, that sometimes, you do!

Jan Ford

If your church would like to try something like this please feel free to contact me on greg.bartlem@covcofe.org.

Elevate

"Dynamic youth event with relevant teaching, lively worship, and an evangelistic heart" 11-16 year olds
6:00pm-8:30pm 3rd Sunday of every month

Rugby Baptist Church

Regent Place
Rugby
Warwickshire
CV21 2PJ

Have a great weekend and do be in touch!