

Caring For Life

'BUILDING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS'



SHARING THE LOVE OF JESUS • MAY 2024



JP'S JOURNAL

BY JONATHAN - CEO

'BUILDING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS'

Dear friends,

I pray this bulletin finds you well.

I would like to thank and encourage you in the knowledge that your prayers and your faithful support and love are making a huge difference to those in our care. Without your partnership we would not be able to spread the gospel net across this city and reach those who our Lord has such compassion for.

The Lord through His divine grace has created a wonderful ministry here, and it's a work that has so many different elements and features, but they all have one aim, and that's to introduce people to Christ.

Proclaiming the gospel, no matter what part of society we live in or whatever generation, has always been a difficult task. Think about our forefathers, those disciples of Jesus who built the church and who took the gospel to

the world. They all had opposition and it cost them greatly to do it.

In modern day Britain the challenges are still as real, maybe not in relation to our lives being at risk, as is the case for many others around the world, but we come up against apathy and aggression.

Still we must speak of God's call to sinners, God's wrath, and God's Grace, found in Christ. At Caring For Life, we make that call each day as we share Jesus' love and as we create space and time to speak of our precious Saviour.

You will remember that in last month's bulletin we dug into the question of what sharing the Love of Jesus really means and what it looks like in practice. In this bulletin we would like to focus on another crucial feature of this ministry's work, namely 'Relationships'.



"...it's a work that has so many different elements and features, but they all have one aim, and that's to introduce people to Christ."



Whilst we have many complex and technical situations to deal with, ultimately this work all comes down to building relationships with people. Praise the Lord, we can say that we have some of the most wonderful relationships with those in our care, and I can say that some are truly my dearest and closest friends.

The way we build those relationships is so important as we create the environment for a person to see the genuineness of our faith and the sincerity of our love for them. This process takes, in most cases, a very long time.

Over the years we have seen so many people build deep and meaningful relationships with us. That has given them the safety net to express many fears and anxieties and it has given many the space to grow as people and gain strength where before they felt so weak and helpless.

For those of us who have good relationships with family, friends, fellow church members and others too, we know that within that body of people we have folks who we can turn to and share what's on our hearts and

minds. We are confident we will receive a compassionate and understanding response. We trust those we are approaching.

But if you have been rejected and hurt time and time again, that leaves you in a very different state of mind, because you don't know who to trust or who to turn to.

"..I can say that some are truly my dearest and closest friends."

And if, as is the case for so many at CFL, the most important relationship you have breaks down or fails to be what it should be e.g. if a mother neglects her child or a father abuses his responsibilities, tragically, that can destroy that person's ability to form good relationships or to believe that trust can be had in any other person.

So many times we hear those in our care say "I have trust issues." So often it's because they come from a place where they have been badly let down by people, and crucially by those who should have loved them the best.

JP'S JOURNAL

So, we must show them what it's like to be in good, safe, loving relationships, and we do that first, by setting an example of how we as staff, volunteers and supporters love each other. We can learn so much from observing can't we, and that's the same for those in our care. When they arrive at CFL for the first time, the welcome they get is so important and the way they see us interacting with each other is so crucial too.


But then we get to know the person, and we do that by hearing their stories and by spending time listening. It's not always the deep stuff we want to know, so asking about hobbies, interests, what music they like, what programmes they watch is all so important; and if they don't want to share the big stuff, then that's OK.

We also build relationships by walking alongside people, trying to share the load they have to carry. This relationship-building process can, and in most cases does, take a very long time.

I remember many years ago now, a young female staff member asking my Dad how long it would take for someone to trust her. She had only worked for us for about 3 months and was struggling with one young lady in her care, my father replied, "Give it 20 years" and she laughed.

He was being deadly serious, give it at least 20 years in some cases, because why would anyone trust us when they have had promises broken all their lives? Why would they trust us when they have been let down so painfully over the years?

When we embark on building a relationship with someone, we have no expectations, but we hope for good relations to be built. We hope with confidence because if we love as the Lord commands and compels us to do, we know it causes the recipient to respond; that's what we have seen over the years. There is one lady who we rescued 15 years ago, from one of the worst domestic abuse situations we have ever seen. Praise the Lord



"Why would they trust us when they have been let down so painfully over the years?"

she found the courage to leave the abuser and call us for help.

We thank the Lord that she is now in a very different place, both in practical and emotional terms. However, over the years she has been very angry and closed to the gospel. Just recently she shared with us that one of her sons is in prison for a serious crime and the other is in transition, and this has left her so distressed.

*“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort.”
2 Corinthians 1:3*

She shared this with one of our staff members and then said, “You will probably judge my son for transitioning.” The response she got was, “We don’t judge anyone. We love Jesus and speak truth in Love”.

We praise the Lord that, for the first time in 15 years, the lady opened up and asked what is behind our approach and our faith. Please pray for this soul, pray she takes her hurt and anger to the Lord and in Him finds everlasting peace. Pray she would embark on the most important relationship anyone can have, and that’s with the God of all creation.

That moment and conversation was hard fought for and long prayed for, and it came because of the relationship we have with her, a relationship of trust. It was the safe place for her to begin to open up.

Paul the apostle said this about the Lord in 2 Corinthians 1:3 ‘Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort.’ That’s what He is. He is the God of compassion and comfort, and at Caring For Life that compassion and that comfort is so wonderfully evident and is enabling people to feel safety and security in life for the first time. It is creating the space and time for people to see and, in time, come to understand what loving relationships look and feel like. It’s helping people gain trust and build meaningful relationships with others; its helping broken people put their lives back together again.

We all need good friends; we all need to be in good relationships and sadly many aren’t. But above all, we need to be friends with God, just as Abraham was described as being a ‘friend of God.’ That relationship is the only one that really matters. In Him we have a friend we can fully trust and in Him a Saviour who takes away sin and offers eternal life. That’s why in all our relationships at CFL, we always turn people’s eyes to Jesus.

Dear friends, I pray you will turn your eyes to Him and as you seek to build relationships with the hope of loving and winning the lost, I pray He will comfort and bless you, as only He can.

In Him,

Jonathan





RELATIONSHIPS

BY PAUL - *Pastor & Trustee*

'RESTORED THROUGH SHARING THE LOVE OF JESUS'

Our God is a relational God. He exists in the glorious mystery of the Trinity where Father, Son and Holy Spirit relate to one another in a beautifully perfect relationship of love. And God made us in His image: we are relational beings.

"Those at risk find a warm and safe relationship of acceptance in the Caring For Life family."

God has gifted us four basic relationships: with God, with others, with ourselves, with Creation. These four relationships were perfect in Eden as Adam and Eve walked with God, blessed each other, had no problems with their health in body, mind or emotions, and cared carefully for creation.

But sin entered the world and ruptured every one of those relationships. Adam and Eve were separated from God, started blaming one another, falling apart in their physical and mental health, and the animals fled from them.

Yet God, in his love and mercy, sent His Son to restore those relationships. Through his work of reconciliation in his life, death and resurrection Jesus began putting people back together with God, with each other, with themselves and creation. And there will come a day that all creations is waiting for, when He will bring this relational restoration to perfect completion.

On my visits to Caring For Life I witness how God is at work restoring all four relationships through the message of Jesus being shared and the personal care that is given. Even the language around the farm





is restorative and those cared for are treated with dignity and respect and are referred to as "Gentlemen and Ladies", "Precious People", "Beautiful Souls". Those who thought they were spoilt goods and useless are made to feel their worth and that they matter to people and to God. Caring For Life continues the reputation of the Saviour: "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them".

I hear and see of the Being There Team and the Project Leaders and the TFJs and the Volunteers all building relationships with broken, damaged and vulnerable people. The Rejected and Isolated learn of acceptance with God through the Bible Studies. The Hurt and Traumatized are helped to think rightly about themselves and find their place in the world through pastoral care. The projects enable the Purposeless to find purpose in creativity through art, music, woodwork, catering, and design. The Abused learn to care for God's creation as they tend the magnificent horses in the equestrian, and the fine

hens in the poultry project. The Insecure and Damaged learn to bring beauty to life through nurturing a wide selection of plants and wildlife in horticulture and conservation. Those at risk find a warm and safe relationship of acceptance in the Caring For Life Family. The Battered and Bruised find a home. Sinners are welcomed, and the Unloved find love.

"Those who thought they were spoilt goods and useless are made to feel their worth and that they matter to people and God"

At Caring For Life all four relationships are being restored, tentatively now, but one day perfectly in the glory of the Loving Trinity forever and ever when there will be no more abuse, trauma, hurt, brokenness, damage, sin or people at risk.

Paul



WHY LOVE MATTERS

BY GAYLE - *Pastoral Director*

Love is not something any of us can survive without.

The Bible shows us beautifully the love of God for us in our Saviour Jesus Christ and it's only because of His love and His saving grace that we can come to know Him and have hope for eternity.

But we also need human love, relationship and connection. God created us to exist in families, in communities, in connection with one another. As babies we are wonderfully designed to develop in interaction with our caregivers. In fact there are areas of the brain that only develop through the giving and receiving of love and interaction.

The secular literature on childhood brain development is clear on how crucial these interactions are in the early years. However, we don't outgrow the need for love, support and interaction. Human contact and care remains crucial for all of us throughout life. Without this, we are at risk in terms of both our physical and our mental health.

An article published by the American Psychological Association in 2019 included the following quote.

"There is robust evidence that social isolation and loneliness significantly increase risk for premature mortality, and the magnitude of the risk exceeds that of many leading health indicators;" (Ref Holt-Lunstad 2017)



"...we see trust grow, we see relationships develop and we see people relax into the family of CFL."

So many of those the Lord has brought to Caring For Life have missed out on love and care in their early years which impacts their ability to form healthy relationships and many remain so very isolated as adults.

One of the great blessings of this ministry is the privilege we have to form long-term, genuine, loving, caring relationships with those God brings to us. We cannot expect to gain trust quickly. Many have been repeatedly hurt by those who were supposed to take most care of them. Experience has taught them to be cautious and withhold trust. We need to be so mindful and understanding of this.

By God's grace, however, as we share His love in simple, daily, practical ways we see trust grow, we see relationships develop and we see people relax into the family of CFL.

The long-term nature of our work means that we can give people all the time they need and often trust grows slowly. Sometimes

we are also blessed with relationships that develop more quickly than expected as people begin to sense that they are valued, loved and belong here. This is God's love at work and we are so blessed to be part of what He is doing in people's lives.

The ultimate blessing occurs when people begin to see beyond the love that is shared through the staff and volunteers here and begin to seek our Heavenly Father who is the source of all love.

We are so thankful that God is at work in the precious lives of those we support. Thank you for your prayers for all those who have become part of the CFL family and those who have become part of God's family.

Some staff give a little insight below into how is God is at work with the folk they support...

Gayle

Steve (Agriculture Project Leader)

One of the gentlemen on our team has been attending the project regularly since 2018. His family has had a long term association with CFL over many years and many family members have needed our support.

This young man has been very keen to get to the farm right from the start. He initially didn't have the confidence to catch a bus, so he used to walk, cycle or scoot 7 miles each way to get to the farm. He has blossomed during his time with us. He has grown in confidence and now has many genuine skills on the project. With lots of support and encouragement he is now

managing to live independently and has even begun to seek some paid work.

For some time, this young man had many questions about the Lord and about faith and we had lots of opportunities on the project to talk to him about the gospel. One of our beneficiaries invited him to church and wonderfully he trusted the Lord a few months ago. He is now attending church and Bible studies and is excited to be taking his first steps as a baby Christian. This young man has become a real role model to others on the project.

WHY LOVE MATTERS

Anna (Member of the Agriculture Team)

We have been supporting Sara for a year and a half now and one of the first things she mentioned was that she was so thankful we were 'practicing' Christians because she could tell we really cared.*

Sara often says that being at the farm is one of the only places she feels safe and that she is so thankful to be here. We are thankful to have her and she is so kind and gentle and has a real gift with working with the animals on the farm. She always ends the day with 'I've had a lovely day!' Even if we've spent the whole day mucking out the cows!


Sara has had many tough experiences in her life and has been let down by those she trusted. She often doesn't feel safe; in her home, in her relationships and in terms of her future. It is such a joy to see how she has responded to the love and acceptance she has found at CFL. She

really is a highly valued member of the family now.

Sara has sometimes asked questions about our faith, and some particularly hard questions about heaven. She has spoken about how in the religion she follows, she often doesn't feel good enough and has no certainty of what will happen when she dies.

We've been able to talk about Jesus' love on the cross and that when a person trusts in Jesus and asks for His forgiveness they are totally accepted by Him and have complete assurance and hope that when they die they will be with Him forever.

Sara often asks for prayer and then says how the prayers were answered! So we can keep praying that she'll know the one true God and His amazing love for her.



“Sara often asks for prayer and then she says how the prayers were answered! So we can keep praying that she'll know the one true God and his amazing love for her.”



Erin (Benefits & Tenancies Manager)

The Lord's timing is incredible. When we first met Derek, he had actually turned up whilst we were meeting a new referral for the first time. Derek disclosed during this visit how he was struggling financially following an accident which had left him unable to work.*

He is a very proud man who had worked all over Leeds and so he had struggled with even the thought of applying for benefits. As a result he was in significant debt and was struggling to make ends meet to support both himself and his adult children - to the extent that he had stopped heating his home, wasn't eating regularly and had stopped using electricity, in an attempt to cut costs.

We began supporting him to navigate the benefit system and through that time had many opportunities to share the incredible love of our Saviour. This had a tremendous impact on Derek who it turned out saw no one in between our visits. He was completely socially isolated and was afraid due to his vulnerabilities to leave his home. He was overjoyed when he started attending our art project which became the structure to his week. He would often leave on a Wednesday

counting down to the following week and we knew that the reality is that he wouldn't see anyone until he was back at Art the following week.

As he began to trust, he began to share things that had happened in the past and his fear of the future. Derek began to feel comfortable to share about his experiences growing up in Local Authority care in Leeds. It was so awful to hear how this precious individual suffered and was not protected. We are so thankful though, that he felt able to trust and open up.

Through these conversations we were able to tell him about our Heavenly Father who knows and cares and we were able to share the hope of the Gospel with him. He has started reading the Bible and is asking questions. He has also started attending our Bible studies.

Please pray that he will keep on seeking the Lord and that he will come to know the love, and peace of our Heavenly Father.

**All Names changed to protect identity*



OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH

BY TIM - *Executive Director*

This month's focus has been on relationships. We see the difference that building a good relationship has for those we support when it comes to being able to help people overcome their struggles and in leading them to the Lord.

One aspect of Caring For Life, a crucial one, is the relationship we have with you, our dearly loved and valued supporters. Our relationship with you is something we do not take for granted and we thank the Lord for you every day.

From the outset of this ministry, Peter Parkinson, our founder, was rightly convinced that the source of our support should mainly come from the Lord's people, because from

you, we gain an army of people who pray for the work as well as fund it, but most importantly, you keep us accountable, focussed and encouraged in proclaiming the good news to the poor.

It is our belief and experience that our supporters are just as much a part of the life of this ministry, as our staff and beneficiaries are. The Relationship that we have, through God's grace, unites us in the goal of seeing people rescued from the clutches of this sinful world. This Relationship is what Paul describes as being "Partners in the Gospel".

Almost daily we receive letters which bring us to humble gratitude. People taking personal interest in those we support. We hear of people sharing their wish to support in all sorts of ways, and we are truly encouraged by the way in which the words of encouragement and support come when we feel the weight of the battle.

The Relationship we have with you has a huge impact on those in our care. For them to know that around this country and beyond, there are people remembering them in prayer and also doing all they can in other ways to enable to us to be here makes them think about 'Why would someone do that for me?'

Also, the interaction that many of you have when you visit us and the way you embrace the folks here emphasises what we say to them, that they are 'loved and valued'.



H YOU

We are always blown away by the expressions of love from many of you. Some of you go above and beyond by hosting events for us, doing fund raisers, organising the collection of food or financial gifts from your churches at Harvest time. Some of you run Support Groups or are church ambassadors for us.

Some of you arrange for us to receive straw to help the farm project or donate hens to help the poultry project or even put up Marquees for our Supporters days.

Others offer time which we know is a very precious thing, to come and cut grass, paint walls, brush paths, plant hedges, cook in the kitchens, sort tins, teach people how to read and write; the list goes on and on. The relationship we have with you is real and mutually valued and it is what makes this ministry a special one.

The fact that we can bring you and your needs before the Lord in prayer, or that we can be of some sort of help to you by being available to talk and support you and your churches, when you are in contact with chaotic and hurting people, is such a blessing.

As we look to the future, we are aware that there are going to be challenges. As a body of people whose goal is to serve God, we know that the consequence of sin in this world will be a challenge for us to overcome.

“We are always blown away by the expressions of love from many of you.”

We are reminded of 1 John 4:7. Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God.

We are united in Him, and if we together seek to see Him glorified and His love shared then as we serve, the future challenges will be faced with confidence knowing that our Heavenly father will supply our every need.

We look forward to seeing you at Supporters day. If you are unable to come, please know that we are sincerely humbled by your love and support of this, His work.

Jim





Our Supporters Day is just a two months away and we are really looking forward to seeing you. It really is a "Caring For Life family" occasion, with activities and events for all ages.

Save the date in your diaries today to make sure that you don't miss this special day where we can have fun, catch up and share a special time of thanksgiving together.



MEET THE EXEC & PR:

The Exec and PR teams will be available all day and look forward to chatting with you.

FOR THE KIDS:
Have fun on the Bouncy Castle and Tractor Safari Ride!



VISIT THE PROJECTS: Come and meet staff & beneficiaries and see what's happening on their projects!

NEW HUB!:
Come and look around our new building!



Upcoming events



05

London to Paris Cycle

In June, Michael Ramagnoli will be attempting to cycle 340 miles in 4 days between London and Paris.

June

21

National Three Peaks

A group of our staff members are going to be doing the National Three peaks to raise money for CFL.

June

27

Keswick Convention

Visit our stand at the Keswick Convention Week 3:
27th July - 2nd August 2024

July

There are many more ongoing fundraisers hosted by our supporters, please visit our website to find out more: www.caringforlife.co.uk/fundraise

Upcoming CFL Church Presentations

LOCATION

DATE & TIME

Steep Turnpike Evang Church, DE4

Wed 1st May - 10.00am

Kinmel Bay Church, LL18

Sun 19th May - 10.30am

Bethel Christian Fellowship, SR3

Sun 9th June - 6.30pm

Alverstoke Evang Church, Gosport (ZOOM)

Wed 12th June - 10.00am

Thornhill Baptist Church, WF12

Wed 19th June - 7.30pm

Please contact Pam, Support Coordinator; 0113 230 3610

or pam.parkinson@caringforlife.co.uk for further information about Presentations.

Upcoming Support Group Meetings

HOST

LOCATION

DATE & TIME

Norman & Norma Green

Rugby (ZOOM)

Wed 1st May - 7.30pm

Judy & Terry Smith

Fylde

Mon 13th May - 7.30pm

Andy & Ruth Robinson

Darlington

Fri 17th May - 1.30pm

Peter & Barbara Dean

Heslington, York

Tues 21st May - 2.00pm

David & Sarah Woodruff

Dunstable

Thurs 23rd May - 8.00pm

David & Sarah Woodruff

Dunstable

Fri 24th May - 10.00am

Christine Beacham

Winscombe

Fri 24th May - 8.00pm

Chris Seaton

Solihull

Sat 25th May - 2.00pm

Neil & Sian Green

Brandon

Sat 8th June - 3.00pm

Please contact PR; 0113 230 3600

or pr@caringforlife.co.uk for further information about Support Groups.

Upcoming Fundraising Events

For information about upcoming fundraisers please visit our website

www.caringforlife.co.uk/fundraise



Crag House Farm,
Otley Old Road, Cookridge,
Leeds LS16 7NH

Charity Reg. No. 1174982

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📘 Caring For Life Charity

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