



PRAYER LETTER

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Dear Friends and Supporters,

My first year as Chair of the OK Club Management Committee has been a busy and exciting one where once again we have had the privilege of seeing God work in the lives of the young people on the South Kilburn estate and beyond.

This year I will be on holiday in New Zealand over the festive season. As I prepare to spend Christmas away from my family for the first time (albeit by choice!), I have been reminded once again of the importance of family, particularly at this time of year. For many of the young people who attend activities in Club, the staff and volunteers who they see almost every day are their family. Many of the young people come from families where one parent is absent, some are in homes where there is little financial or emotional security and some have been removed from their parents entirely and are in the care of the state.

In scenarios such as these, the relationships that the young people form with staff and volunteers at the OK Club are often the only constant in their lives. Keith and his team form individual relationships with the young people. They know how they are doing at school and what is going in their lives, and they are able to provide a unique blend of support and encouragement. Psalm 68 v 6 says that *God sets the lonely in families* and I believe that God has set the young people we work with in the 'OK Club Family'. He has given us the responsibility to demonstrate Jesus' love for them and to share his good news with them as they grow up, often in extremely challenging circumstances.

Once again, this is due in no small part to the dedication of our talented group of staff and volunteers – Keith is leading a superb team who are more than capable of dealing with the challenges in South Kilburn. I would like to acknowledge their commitment and thank them for their work. I would also like to thank the rest of the Management

Committee for their support and wise counsel over the past year.

As the recession begins to bite we are aware that the fundraising by applying to the Trusts and Foundations who provide a significant amount of our income is likely to become more difficult. We are therefore looking to shore up our other sources of income. If you regularly give money to the Club we would be grateful if you would prayerfully consider giving more, and if you do not currently give money, perhaps you might consider setting up a standing order? A standing order form is enclosed, and further information is available from the office.



Bouncy summer garden fun!

We really appreciate all your prayers; on the back page we have included a weekly prayer plan suggesting a few prayer points each day.

I hope you have a wonderful Christmas and a blessed New Year.

Becky Foreman

Becky Foreman
Chair of the Management Committee



CHRISTMAS 2008

Director's message

In the last Prayer letter, I focused on some of the many ways in which we bear witness to the Christian basis of our organisation, trying to provide a rich soil full of nutrients to enable seeds of the Kingdom to grow:

'living life to the full'.

I noted that our children and young people are growing up among rampant weeds, and are vulnerable to getting choked, having their personal growth – and even their life – curtailed prematurely – by the false promise of easy drug money, by lack of life chances, lack of self-esteem, lack of role models, lack of family stability, lack of understanding of how to resolve conflict peacefully.

Recently one of our residents was having some difficulty getting his hands clean after painting our fibreglass table-and-chair sets, which had begun to look a bit too 'retro'. This Christmas we are celebrating the birth of a baby in a stable, no doubt also quite a messy environment. The OK Club was 'born' 50 years ago this year, and we continue to get our hands dirty, as God did when He became human, sharing in our sadness, and gladness, as the carol puts it.

In this letter, I initially highlight our partnerships with other organisations. This could also paint quite a messy scenario sometimes, many agendas competing with each other, but I will concentrate on some of the more positive outcomes.

This year has seen our profile significantly raised. In tune with a new Youth Strategy for South Kilburn, we have been quite successful in raising funds by demonstrating our partnership with others, and will next year chair the South Kilburn Youth Providers group. As North Kilburn Partnership chair, and as a member of a new Kilburn Locality Board, I am also helping to develop new provision for children and young people across the whole of Kilburn, and am part of a group coordinating assessments and appointing 'lead professionals'.

One result is that we run more programmes that can

attract accreditation and certification. Examples are courses in art, video and story-telling, a bicycle repair workshop and money-managing advice sessions. Some of those on our weight-training programme have gone on to regular sessions in a local gym.

Our grant from the Tom ap Rhys Pryce Trust has helped us to address the needs of young people caught up in potentially violent street crime. We are deeply moved that its trustees, motivated by the death of a son and fiancée who was a victim of such violence, actually encouraged us to spend time with young people at risk, and create opportunities for them to make a positive contribution to the community. We praise God that this has proved possible.

I attended a reception at 10 Downing Street to highlight the approach taken.

An example of the positive impact of mentoring and investment of time in a young person's life can be seen in the lives of those we engage in sports, some of whom have committed to coaching at weekly sessions with younger

people aged between 11 and 14. Some young people we know who were put into care or custodial institutions over the past 18 months have also wished to remain in regular long-term contact and we have been pleased to try to do so. Children have been referred to us using the Common Assessment Framework

We became aware in April that a young person was developing a potentially destructive attitude towards himself and other people, including some of his own friends. At the beginning of May, with 3 other young people we did not then know, it seems that he deliberately set light to a caravan that had been donated free to the club, the only significant act of criminal damage we have had for well over 2 years. The 17 year-old alleged as responsible was spotted by a fast-thinking volunteer as being well known to us. Consequently, we were able to formulate an action-plan for him instead of his being prosecuted, with the full agreement of the police. Through mentoring we learned about his current needs and were able to work out how best to



Participants in the bicycle workshop

help him. We have since often seen distinct major changes for the better in his behaviour – including reconciliation with the volunteer. He often shows promise as a positive leader, with a desire to find meaning and direction for his life. Our work with him, as with others, is of course ongoing, as young people are inevitably affected by all the usual adolescent emotional ups and downs. We know there are no quick fix solutions to supporting troubled young people; but we have made a commitment to joining them on a journey, and the results are encouraging.

Significantly, most of our members currently are over 16, some over 20. Open sessions for such young people have been popular, sometimes attracting over 60 at a time. There are several new contacts in most weeks. Our current residents – who include a German band - are enabling us to provide sessions of individual tuition in guitar, keyboard and drums or singing. Another recent innovation is a weekly volleyball session, with a group of local young people supplemented and coached by an enthusiastic group of Brazilians in their 20s. Young people also helped to transport 2 tons of soil into the Club poly-tunnel. As well as an annual week-long residential trip to Devon, we also took a group of young women on a residential trip to Oxford led partly by a current Christian undergraduate. Through such trips we aim to help young people to consider their prospects and potential in a much wider context than local South Kilburn.

In May, the artistic talents of young people were put on display in an exhibition at the OK Club, raising over £2,000. In many cases the proceeds were shared equally with the young contributors. A highlight was the showcase of a comic magazine, a very ambitious piece of work, intricately and expertly executed by a 14 year old boy – and 15 people signed themselves up to purchase a copy.



The art exhibition May 2008



Impromptu outdoor basketball

Urgent action has been necessary to avert impending cashflow difficulties, for example by reducing part-time staff hours, not implementing increments and inflation increases to staff salaries, and by urgently bidding for extra funds. More funding bids are now within a highly competitive field. Sometimes the only option for raising income is to work in partnership, which runs the risk of reducing the time available for some of the priorities of our own organisation.

So, as we gather around the baby born in a stable, perhaps a little like some of the domesticated animals also present, let us recall that He grew 'in favour with God and men' but eventually challenged people so much that they ended up having him put to death – but his sinlessness conquered that. So let us 'get our hands dirty', and pray we too may be able to rise above it all through Him.

Keith

Keith Lunn (Director)

Staffing

A Big Thank You to **110** different people involved in running programmes at the OK Club over the past year (including 11 on the Management Committee). Here are their names (with apologies to anyone inadvertently left off the list):

Alex, Alistair, Aimee, Amandine, Amos, Amy, Andrew, Anna, Arthur, Bart, Becky, Beom-Jin, Bertha, Candy, Caroline, Cassius, Chenoa, Chris, Clara, Clive, Coreen, Craig, Cynthia, Daniel, Darren, Dominic, Dwayne, Emmanuel, Fenton, Gary, Gift, Godwin, Grace, Hannah, Harry, Heidi, Hinda, Ildiko, Ivan, Iyasha, Jamie B, Jamie, Jane, Jay, Jeff N, Jeff, Jeni, Joanna, John A, John B, John K, John M, Johnny, Johnson, Joy, Justus, Karl, Kashta, Keith, Laura, Lee, Len, Luke, Makida, Mark H, Mark L, Martin, Martyn, Matt, Maureen, Mei, Mike, Naomi, Nathalie, Nelson, Nick B, Nick W, Nora, Patrick, Paul, Philip, Phyllis, Pino, Pratik, Raphael, Richard, Rio, Rob, Rose, Rosie, Salma, Sam, Sandra, Sara, Sarah, Shabaz, Shaheen, Shesh, Sonal, Stefan, Steve, Sue, Sunil, Stuart, Tae Hun, Tim, Tobias, Tyson, and Will.

turning green!



Gardening project

The OK Club is turning green! We have recently been given two grants to cover the cost of installing solar panels on the roof of the Club (from EDF Energy's Green

Fund, and the government's Low Carbon Building Program). The solar panels will cover the top of the main club building, and they will save us around £2,000 per year by generating electricity.

We are going to use these saving to launching a series of linked projects under the umbrella of 'Environmental action and Awareness' with the aim of promoting a an environmentally friendly ethos among young people.

We already promote recycling and re-using, and educate young people about the impact they can have

upon their planet, and ultimately, their own future, just through thinking more about the way they consume, and how they treat their immediate environment.

We'll be developing our gardening project, and our brand new poly-tunnel (pictured) lot more in 2009, as well as the bicycle and car maintenance sessions. Sessions in the new Skills Share Workshop will also teach young people how to mend, rather than throw away, and even how to create things from scratch rather than having to buy them. We'll also be running environmentally themed trips to themed gardens and city farms.

We view the solar panel installation as a pilot – and in the future we'll be looking at extending our alternative energy production. Who knows? One day we might be completely self-sufficient!

Jeff Nottingham (Administrator)

weekly prayer plan

- a further fundraising art exhibition with music, to help our youth ministry
- sufficient funding, particularly to help extend our professional staffing
- energy and creativity for staff to keep attracting/engaging young people
- fundraising to extend our Christian ministry, and youth-led worship
- our training programmes to increase the involvement of young people
- preparing our young people to put on Christian performance events
- more opportunities to use Club for Christian conferences/residentials
- Oxford students helping to run weekend groups & Summer Bible Camp
- vehicle maintenance workers and a possible new SkillShare Workshop
- further development of gardening promoting partial self sufficiency
- our promotion of recycling and re-use initiatives and 'low impact' living
- debate sessions, sometimes involving local Councillors and MPs
- new activity clubs for eg table-tennis, swimming, basketball and chess
- further development of our IT suite, including for homework support
- development of our work with children, and the parent & toddler group
- Christian partnership work concerning unaccompanied refugee 16-19s
- our work to build the capacity of smaller children & youth organisations
- wisdom concerning possible activity sessions involving police officers
- Christian partnership work concerning help to rehabilitate ex-offenders
- good reports in future book mentioning Club as youth ministry example
- continuing to build more longer-term relationships with OICCU students
- our workers on Oasis, Centre for Youth Ministry & YMCA JNC Courses
- plans for specifically advertised 'Youth Alpha' type & bible study groups

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday