

Christmas Report 2016

The strong foundation from regular contributors, new sources of support and the generous time given by our volunteers enabled us to provide help to over 2426 people facing hardship this Christmas.

Our grateful thanks goes to all the local schools, churches, and individual donors who supported us by donating goods, toys, books, supermarket/gift vouchers and money. We would like to thank Goddard & Co Ltd. who for many years have donated the boxes which our volunteers make into hampers.

Our community fundraising from churches, friends, service users, VSL staff and local businesses contributed to almost half of the total funds raised. Collections for food, toys and children's books were made in Budgens, Sydenham and Crofton Park. We were also one of the three charities chosen for Waitrose, Beckenham's Community Affairs programme in November. VSL staff, together with the Challenge, a Charity working with young people on education in citizenship and the Community Connections Team, organised two cake sales in Laurence House. One member of the VSL staff team was sponsored to walk the Inca Path. A local resident association and an individual organising a street party all contributed to the community feel the project has.

We were also generously supported by a number of Charitable Trusts and children's book publishers listed below.

We continued our partnership with King's Church and the Big Red Box Scheme who provided us with 80 food hampers for our larger families who have 5 or more family members.

More than 30 volunteers helped with packing and sorting, the project was visited by 54 primary school children from Stillness Primary, St Dunstan's and Holy Trinity and their teachers to find out where their donations are going. We supported 5 individuals with learning disabilities to gain experience volunteering.

326 (60 double and 266 single) hampers were delivered to elderly and vulnerable/isolated service users. (440 people)

300 families received supermarket gift vouchers (1200 people).

A total of 625 children and/or teenagers received toys, books and stocking fillers or gift vouchers. Of the above gift requests 496 were for children under 13 years and 129 were teenagers.

10 large boxes were donated to the Trussell Trust Food Bank benefiting more than 60 individuals.

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5 large boxes of food and goods were donated to a local homeless hostel to support 40 families (approximately 160 individuals).

A local hostel supporting people with mental health difficulties received gifts and toiletries and 30 boxes of biscuits and mince pies benefitting their 67 residents.

A temporary accommodation hostel in Forest Hill received 20 boxes of biscuits for their annual Christmas party benefitting around 50 of the residents.

100 guests (70 VSL's service users) attended the Christmas Day Lunch at Perry Rise Baptist Church 60 diners were transported to and from the event by volunteer drivers. Each guest received a gift from VSL and enjoyed a delicious meal. 25 of our volunteers helped with driving, serving and other supporting tasks on the day.

In addition, 15 service users attended the Grove Centre Social Club Christmas disco (for people with mental health difficulties) and they enjoyed a Christmas party with pizzas.

A sincere thank you goes to

The Alchemy Foundation

The Haberdashers' Company
The Lee Charity of William Hatcliffe
Lewisham Parochial Charities
Marsh Christian Trust
Souter Charitable Trust

Toy's Trust
Gregg's Foundation

Budgens Sydenham
Budgens Crofton Park
Goddards & Co Ltd
Waitrose, Beckenham

Hachette Books
Walker Books
Bloomsbury Books
Usborne Books

Individual sponsors for their generous contributions

Holy Trinity Church for the use of their space and the many kind gestures that made coordinating the project a pleasure. The Budgens Sydenham and Crofton Park for providing a platform at the heart of our communities to collect food, toys and money.

All of our volunteers - we could not achieve this without you!

Registered Charity No. 266585

Registered in England No. 1131214

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