

## **Christmas Report 2017**

The VSL Christmas Project supported 2455 people at Christmas who were facing isolation and hardship. We achieved this with the help of the whole community, longstanding supporters as well as new sources of support and dedicated volunteers who gave their time and energy packing hampers and toys, delivering them out and helping at the Christmas Day Lunch.

We are very grateful to all the local schools and nurseries, Lewisham churches, and individuals who supported us by donating goods, toys, books, supermarket/gift vouchers and money. Thank you to Goddard & Co Ltd. who for many years have donated the boxes which our volunteers make into hampers.

### **Funding and in kind donations**

We were one of three charities chosen for Waitrose, Beckenham's Community Affairs programme in November. We organised two cake sales in Laurence House with the help of the Community Connections Project and young people from Sedgehill 6<sup>th</sup> form, a school based in Catford and the Challenge, a charity working with young people on citizenship and education.

Budgens (Crofton Park) and Co-op (Crofton Park) kindly hosted a collection point where over five weeks local people donated food, toys and children's books. Tesco (Catford) hosted a toy collection over three days.

A number of Charitable Trusts and children's book publishers listed at the end of the report supported us and we were very pleased to have local support from the Sydenham Assembly this year.

### **Volunteering**

50 volunteers helped on a rota basis with packing and sorting, which included corporate volunteers from Regular Cleaning, Lewisham and Oxford International Language School, Greenwich. We were very pleased to have a service user who has been benefiting from the project come and support us this year with one of her children.

54 primary school children and teachers from Stillness Primary, St Dunstan's and Holy Trinity and their teachers visited the project to find out what happens with their donations and to help pack hampers.

9 young people from Drumbeat School, a specialist school for children with autism came and did fantastic work helping us pack.

### **Hampers, toys, vouchers in numbers**

85 food hampers for families with 5 or more family members were packed by Kings Church and distributed through VSL.

330 hampers were delivered to elderly and vulnerable/isolated service users. (444 people)

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300 families received supermarket gift vouchers (1200 people).

581 children and teenagers received a gift/voucher.

80 residents of a local hostel supporting people with mental health difficulties received gifts and toiletries and 30 bags of food.

50 residents who live in temporary accommodation in Forest Hill received 20 boxes of biscuits and Christmas puddings for their annual Christmas party.

### **Christmas Day Lunch and Christmas Disco**

We are extremely thankful to Churches Together Sydenham and Forest Hill who co-organised the Christmas Day Lunch which took place in Perry Rise Baptist Church. We are very grateful to Criterion Ice for providing ice cream for everyone at the lunch.

The Christmas Day Lunch catered for 100 people; 55 diners were transported to and from the event by volunteer drivers. Each guest received a gift from VSL and enjoyed a delicious meal and entertainment. 27 volunteers helped with serving and other supporting tasks on the day, 15 supported with driving.

15 service users attended the Grove Centre Social Club Christmas disco (for people with mental health issues) and they enjoyed a Christmas party with pizzas and 10 drop in service users received food vouchers bringing Christmas cheer to them.

### **Thank you to:**

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

Ravensbourne Rotary Club  
Hachette Books  
Walker Books  
Bloomsbury Books  
Usborne Books  
C H Goddard & Co Ltd  
Waitrose, Beckenham

...and the individual sponsors for their generous contributions.

Holy Trinity Church for the use of their space and being extremely helpful and generous in so many ways.

The Budgens (Crofton Park), Co-op (Crofton Park) and Tesco (Catford) for providing a platform at the heart of our communities to collect food and toys.

**A big thank you to all our volunteers - we could not achieve this without you!**

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