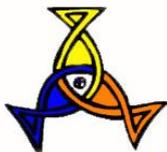


Three Churches Project Annual Report 2009



Forbidden Corner



Three Churches Project

St. Matthew's, Chapel Allerton
Stainbeck United Reformed
Holy Trinity, Meanwood

www.threechurches.org.uk

A member of
Leeds Christian Community Trust



LCCT

releasing dreams and visions

A brief summary of the year:

2009 was a year of two halves for the project. There has been a definite sense of us needing now to develop the model in which we work and a sadness that we have still not managed to inspire a good mix of people from our member churches to get involved, neither as volunteers, nor as “punters”. However, the last few months of the year brought such a burst of new opportunities, including possibilities in the lower end of Meanwood where we have not yet made much headway, that the 2010 begins with renewed hope, energy and sense of purpose. Our regular groups have continued and developed well, if not growing in size then certainly growing in relationship, and we have moved into a place where partnership working has opened opportunities without a great additional stretch of resources on our part. In fact, we continue to see other organisations giving us their support. It is a sign of favour and encouragement that the Church should be so resourced, but it has only come as we ourselves have been willing to give.

Our regular groups:

ReFresh: (6.30-8pm, Mondays in term time). A club for children age 7-12). This group now has a very solid core of young people attending, some of whom have had to deal with very difficult life circumstances and it is a real privilege to know them. Our leaders are volunteers living and working in the local community, as well as members of our churches. It's good to have built relationships now over a number of years, with children and parents alike. Big thanks to all our brilliant volunteers!

Fast Forward: (7.30-9pm, Mondays in term time). Run jointly with Leeds Youth Service, for young people age 13+, again, this club has a strong core group of young people attending. We are now at the stage of making plans to develop this work further.

Craft Club: (2-4pm, Thursdays, following Stainbeck's Community Café). A little oasis in the week. This is a relaxed place to try new crafts or just to continue your own project in the company of others. We have had lots of interest this year from mums of young children, and we are putting things in place to begin a crèche for them in 2010.

Ballroom dancing for kids: (4-5 pm Tuesdays term time). Supported by other organisations, we have been trained to teach waltz, jive, quickstep and cha cha to children from our local schools. More details below.

A timeline of the year's events:

Jan – March: We ran three events as part of a wider healthy living project sponsored by NHS Leeds: Strictly Fun Ballroom Dancing; Community Big Sing and Community Drum Circle. The big sing was great fun but unfortunately we did not attract the wider community (I still have high hopes for this sort of event – corporate singing has since become much more “cool” following lots of singing shows on television). We did, however, see new faces at both the ballroom dancing and drumming events - people who have returned to take part in activities since. A good start to the year.



Apr: Family Fun Day, a celebration to round off the Healthy Living project. The whole project was a good example of partnership working in the area, which is a significant part of our work. It's really important for the Church to understand the workings of other agencies that also have an impact on our society, to input positively to their work, learn from them and share resources. We cannot continue to think we can work alone – we all need each other!

Apr & May: I ran a project with girls from Carr Manor High School, looking at fashion, ethics and Gok Wan! The best treat was the trip to West Yorkshire Playhouse Costumes – always friendly and always fun.

Jun: We took our ReFresh and Fast Forward groups to the Carriageworks Theatre after they generously offered to cover the cost of the children's tickets. It was certainly an eventful evening! For most of the young people, it was their first experience of theatre but I think the person who took the most away from it was me (prepare for ALL eventualities – yes, it was a challenging evening!) I really can't say whether or not the young people found it a positive experience, but it was good to do something different and special. It was also a reminder to me and the team how easy it is to surround ourselves with like-minded people who share similar life experiences. It's so much richer to spend time with people of all sorts of worldviews, backgrounds and beliefs, however much harder we have to work at it.

Jul: I ran the first of a number of drum circles at Meanwood Children's Centre. It's very different (and for me, quite challenging), running such

an activity with children so young, but again, it's been good for building relationships and getting to know people from the area. And most importantly, it's great to see the children exploring sound, creativity and play.



July was a busy month as we were also involved with a Beckhill BBQ and local church holiday clubs. Both were great successes: lots of people, lots of fun, lots of sunshine and music. Just what the summer needs.

Aug: I went on a trip to Forbidden Corner, organised by Maureen from Zest for Life (an NHS organisation.) It was a great day out with families from the local area and I've kept in touch with some of the young people I met there.

Sept: Craft Club took a trip to Artsmix in Sheepscar. It's a really interesting place full of talented people and great crafting equipment. Again, it was good to do something different together to inspire us for the year ahead.



Oct: Evening of Ballroom and Latin Dance. Competing with the X Factor and Strictly Come Dancing on a Saturday Night was risky, but it was a good evening

enjoyed by all and those that came, came from far and wide. More of these to come!

Ann Coates and I also ran a couple of after-school drama sessions at Mill Field Primary School; well, I should say Ann ran them and I enjoyed taking part. We're hoping to keep up the links over the coming year and run a couple of sessions each term.

I also started to help out at Stainbeck's Lunch Club on Mondays and Wednesdays, which has been a great way to meet older people from our area as well as spend valuable time with church and community volunteers.



Nov: We got the ball rolling on our new Ballroom and Latin Dance Club for kids. With the sponsorship and support of Leeds Schools Sports Partnership and Essentially Dance, this has been lots of fun and has welcomed in a completely new group



of people we've never met before. Boys and girls are enjoying taking part and it's been wonderful to have parents joining in too! I'm really hoping this will be the start of more work that brings all the age groups together as I'm beginning to realise how many people have little contact across all the generations.

Another highlight of November was to welcome INSPIRATIONS to lead singing workshops with our ReFresh and Fast Forward Groups. This has led the way for us to start a singing and drama club in the new year and one of the best thing is that Inspirations bring a lot of talent and knowledge of local kids, so I can just sit back and enjoy!

Dec: had the usual mix of Christmas activity. It's a great way of drawing together people from so many different groups to have a focus on Jesus.

Vanessa Brown, Project Worker

Finances:

Well, we're still here but as it stands, time is running out. We are beginning to look for additional funding for the post alongside a review process that we are currently undergoing with Livability (review funded by Leeds Christian Community Trust.) Formal accounts will be available by the beginning of April 2010.

We are currently funded by:

Leeds Christian Community Trust;
Diocese of Ripon and Leeds;
United Reformed Church Yorkshire Synod;
Church Urban Fund;
The Three Partner Churches;
Leeds City Council Wellbeing Fund: (The Well-Being Fund grant is awarded by local Ward Members through the North East (Inner) Area Committee)