

Spring 2021

Newsletter

Catholic
Children's
Society



CCS supporters offer a lifeline to children & families impacted by Covid-19

Thanks to your kind support, the Catholic Children's Society (CCS) is continuing to help vulnerable children and families through the pandemic.

Many families have experienced unprecedented challenges this winter. Families who have never faced financial difficulties before have found themselves at breaking point due to Covid. Those impacted by job losses and illness have been left unable to heat their homes, buy warm clothing or feed their children.

Thankfully, CCS supporters have helped thousands of vulnerable families and offered hope to those in desperate situations.

Through our Crisis Fund, we have been able to provide immediate financial support for over 4,900 children and parents/carers.

At Christmas CCS supporters also donated gift cards and supermarket vouchers to over 1,000 children and young people. This generosity brought much needed happiness to families facing an uncertain future.

Headteachers, parents and carers have been in touch to say thank you:

"Oh my goodness, honestly I can't express how much this will help our families. This is going to change Christmas for so many of them. I cannot thank you all enough."

(Headteacher)

Helping families in crisis – James' Story



James' wife died three years ago leaving him to bring up their three young daughters alone. He has worked hard as a barber for many years and finally opened his own shop in February 2020. Then Coronavirus struck. His shop had to close and, as a new business, it wasn't eligible for any government support.

James had some savings, but these were quickly eaten up supporting his children and paying the rent and bills. Every month got harder and by January he could just about cover the rent but had no money left to heat the house or buy food for his children.

Increasingly desperate and with no family or friends to turn to, James did not know what to do or where to go for support.

James called his children's school to explain what was happening. The children's Headteacher immediately contacted CCS and we were able to help the family buy food and heat their home over the winter months.

"After getting this help I feel like I can finally breathe. It has been the push I needed to keep me going."

(James)

"I have had the joy of seeing the difference your kindness has made. This is the first time I have asked for support for a family and you could not have done more for us ... You are doing wonderful work."

(Headteacher)

James and his children are among the thousands of people who we have been able to help through the pandemic. This is only possible because of our supporters – thank you.

Make a difference to disadvantaged children by leaving a gift in your Will

By leaving a gift in your will, you can help the Catholic Children's Society provide enduring support for vulnerable children long into the future.

For more information please go to our website (www.cathchild.org.uk/leave-a-gift-in-your-will) or contact Greg Brister by calling **020 8969 5305** or emailing gregb@cathchild.org.uk



Helping children cope with grief and loss during the pandemic

Since September we have trained over 40 schools to deliver the Rainbows Bereavement Support Programme.

Sadly demand for this programme has increased dramatically during the pandemic. Many children have lost parents, grandparents or other family members and are finding coping with this grief whilst being isolated at home extremely challenging.

Family breakdown is also a growing concern, with many children seeing their parents separate due to the pressures of the pandemic. This sense of loss can feel overwhelming for children.

Our Rainbows training will ensure school staff have the skills and expertise to provide structured support groups for children who have experienced these losses. These groups offer important early intervention support,



helping vulnerable children process their grief, feel less alone and develop greater resilience.

Feedback from schools has been extremely positive. One teacher said:

“This programme will make a huge difference to our young people who have experienced tragic losses in recent months. Thank you for this vital training.”

Enabling young people to access online learning

We have been able to help disadvantaged young people continue their education throughout the pandemic.

Thousands of young people have been unable to access online learning during school closures. Although some devices had been given out by the government, many children and young people were left without any way to attend online lessons or complete work. This has put children living in poverty at a huge disadvantage.

Thankfully we were able to secure funding for over 100 laptops which have been distributed to disadvantaged young people across London. Families were incredibly grateful for this support:

“Now he is able to learn and complete his work – this means everything to my son.”
(Parent)



“Many families here in Southall live in poverty and day to day living is a challenge ... the new chrome books had an immediate impact ... The best feedback I can give is the faces on the parents and children. They are so grateful and cannot believe that they are being given a device. The quality of the children’s work has significantly improved.”
(Headteacher)

Children and young people join together for CCS

Advent Carol Service

For the first time our annual Advent Carol Service for schools went online and was viewed over 1,500 times!

Although we could not go to Westminster Cathedral in December, children and young people across the diocese were able to join together for CCS and attend our special Advent Carol Service from their schools.

The service featured a welcome from our President Cardinal Vincent Nichols and a homily from our Chairman Fr. Michael Daley. Children and young people contributed special performances and Clover the donkey even made an appearance!

Lenten Appeal

Each year we engage with over 140 schools during Lent, producing resources which promote Catholic Social Teaching and encourage children and young people to work together for the Common Good.

This year we have created a package of online resources for children and young people inspired by Pope Francis's recent encyclical 'Fratelli Tutti.'

We are very grateful to the thousands of young people who are taking part in the CCS challenge to become Good Samaritans and help those in need.



A Headteacher got in touch to say:

"Everyone loved it. With all the strangeness at the moment, this gave our children a sense of normality and a feeling of being part of a community. Thank you."



All Lent resources can be found on our website: www.cathchild.org.uk/lent

Marathon places still available for 2021!

We have just two places left for the iconic 2021 London Marathon, which will take place on 3rd October.

This year will be the world's first 100,000 person marathon – would you like to be one of them? If you are interested in joining Team CCS and fundraising for local disadvantaged children and families, please contact Emily by emailing emilym@cathchild.org.uk

