

Autumn 2021

Newsletter

Catholic
Children's
Society



CCS supporters help over 8,000 children and their families

Throughout the pandemic, our supporters have enabled the Catholic Children's Society (CCS) to help thousands of vulnerable children and their families.

During the past year...

- Over 3,500 children and parents/ carers received emergency food and essentials
- Over 450 school staff were trained to deliver our Rainbows Bereavement Support Programme to help children struggling with grief and loss
- Over 500 people were supported via our Post Adoption service
- Over 2,300 children and parents/carers received mental health support from our experienced counsellors/therapists
- Over 750 school staff received training to help them support children experiencing mental health difficulties

Thank you so much for making this possible!

How you helped Mary

Two years ago, six-year-old Mary and her mother came to the UK as refugees. Last year Mary started seeing a CCS therapist.

When Mary started school she was incredibly anxious and would withdraw into herself. Every morning Mary would cling to her mother's leg at the school gate. She struggled to make friends and was unable to engage in lessons.

Our CCS therapist encouraged Mary to explore her early experiences through play. Mary focused on memories of her difficult journey to the UK. Using toys she would act out traumatic incidents from the past, often focusing on times when she had been separated from her mother.

The therapist supported Mary as she explored her feelings of fear and panic, particularly around losing her mother again and being left alone. Therapy sessions provided Mary with a safe space to share these fears and anxieties.

Our therapist also worked with Mary's mother, suggesting strategies to help her daughter feel more secure and develop positive relationships with others.



As a result of lockdown, Mary lost the supportive school environment she relied upon. Our therapist was able to make immediate contact with Mary and her mother and held weekly check-in calls. Mary would eagerly anticipate her calls with the therapist and the opportunity to speak to someone she knew and trusted.

Following her return to school, Mary's teacher was astonished at the change in Mary. She had grown in confidence, and now participates in lessons and has developed friendships with children in her class. Mary said:

"I used to feel so frightened. Now I feel much happier and I'm not scared anymore."

Thank you from families at St Francis

Families at the CCS St Francis Family Centre in Poplar wanted to say thank you to our supporters for the ongoing help they have received during the pandemic.

"Without St Francis, I would not have spoken to anyone during lockdown. Staff helped me every day and I could not have got through this on my own. Thank you for being there."

"I could not have coped with lockdown without St Francis . . . staff listened to me and helped me with any problems I was having. Thank you so much for this lifeline."

Christmas cards on sale now!

Our 2021 Christmas card brochure is enclosed. These depict the true story of Christmas and have been endorsed by our President, Cardinal Vincent Nichols.

This year's cards include the Adoration of the Child with Saints by Fra Filippo Lippi, featuring St Joseph and St Jerome. This design has been specially chosen to mark the Year of St Joseph and the Year of the Word.

Order forms can be posted directly to our fulfilment company (see address on the back page of our brochure) or in the freepost envelope provided. Alternatively you can order:

- Online at www.cathchild.org.uk/christmas-cards
- By calling 01948 831 046

Card orders will be dispatched from early October onwards. Please allow up to 15 working days for your cards to be delivered.



Benefactors' Mass

You, your family and friends are warmly invited to join us at this year's Benefactors' Mass.

Mass will be celebrated by our Chairman, Fr Michael Daley, at St Etheldreda's Church (Ely Place, London EC1N 6RY) on Sunday 5th December 2021 at 2pm. This is a wonderful opportunity to offer thanks to the many people, past and present, whose support has enabled us to reach out to local disadvantaged children and families.

Donations needed for our Christmas Gift Appeal

We would be so grateful for any new gifts or vouchers to help families who are struggling this Christmas.

Every year our supporters generously donate gifts which we distribute to local disadvantaged children to give them a Christmas they will remember. We are anticipating high demand this year and would greatly appreciate any help you can offer.

Please drop off any donations to our main office (73 St Charles Square, London W10 6EJ) by 6th December. Unfortunately, we are unable to accept second-hand items.



Thank you Rosemary- and welcome to our new CEO!

After 33 years at CCS, Dr Rosemary Keenan has retired, and Greg Brister has been appointed as our new CEO.

Rosemary led CCS with passion, energy and commitment and we are so grateful for her years of service. Since Rosemary became CEO in 2009 CCS has:

- Launched Crisis Funds across Westminster, Southwark and Arundel and Brighton supporting over 11,000 individuals
- Achieved 'Outstanding' in our Ofsted inspection for both St Francis Family Centre and our Post Adoption service
- Provided Mental Health and Rainbows Bereavement Support training for over 9,000 school staff
- Quadrupled the size of our school counselling service, which is now delivered in approximately 80 schools
- More than tripled the total number of individuals accessing our services each year

We wish Rosemary all the very best and a long and well-deserved retirement!



Dr Rosemary Keenan and Greg Brister with Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Fr Michael Daley and Monsignor Phelim Rowland

We are delighted that Greg Brister has been appointed CEO. Greg has been with CCS for 13 years and was previously Deputy CEO.

Greg's message to our supporters:

"It has been a great privilege to work at CCS for so long and to see the difference your support makes to children's lives. I am very much looking forward to building on Rosemary's incredible legacy and continuing to grow and develop our services to help many more children and families in need".

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 be there for vulnerable children long into the future.

The will company Kwil are currently offering CCS supporters a free will writing service.

For more information about Kwil or other ways you can leave a gift, please go to our website (www.cathchild.org.uk/leave-a-gift-in-your-will) or contact Katie Waring by calling **020 8969 5305** or emailing katiew@cathchild.org.uk

