



# Brentwood Schools Christian Worker Trust Newsletter, Spring Term 2020

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**"Serving school communities by providing Christian learning and support"**



## Shaping Lives

Recently, I watched the film "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood", starring Tom Hanks as real-life American Fred Rogers. I was inspired by the story of this Presbyterian minister who shaped the lives of generations of children with his extraordinary commitment to helping them learn about themselves, others and the world around them, through his television show, "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood."

I am honoured to work alongside people within BSCWT who also carry an amazing commitment to helping children and young people and I believe we have a vital part to play in the spiritual development and support of children and young people in the Brentwood area. I thank you for your support for our work and for taking the time to catch up with us through this newsletter.

*Ian Kemble, Director of Schools Work*

## 9 things we are doing in schools this term:

- 17 *Easter Cracked* workshops
- Assemblies in over 25 primary and secondary schools
- Supporting pupils pastorally in 7 schools
- 8 Year 7 *Bullying & Self-Concept* lessons
- 11 *Sadness to Joy* lessons
- 4 *Easter Prayer Spaces*
- OT/NT Mini lessons (formerly *Bible Exploren*)
- *Caterpillars* and *Butterflies* groups in 2 primary schools
- Lunchtime clubs in 7 schools



## Our Annual Celebration

will take place on the evening of **Monday 6th July 2020**. We will be celebrating the work that God is doing through BSCWT in the

schools of the Brentwood area and we would love you to join us! Please make a note of the date and further details will be in our Summer Term Newsletter.

Decorating cakes at 'Easter Cracked' last year



## Looking to Easter...

The main Christian festival of the year, celebrated from its beginning by the early church, Easter seems to have become a poor relation to Christmas in the wider consciousness these days. While Christmas is huge in both Christian and secular circles alike, Easter is a very different case. Although the Easter Bunny, chocolate eggs and egg hunts are increasingly marketed to the public, for most people, Easter Sunday and its bank holidays are welcomed for allowing time away from work or a chance to get away to sunnier climes or wintery ski slopes.

All the more reason to educate our young people about Easter as the most important Christian Festival! In Schools Work, Easter is just as busy, important and consuming of our energy and resources as Christmas! This year we aim to take as many *Easter Cracked* lessons as we did for *Christmas Unwrapped*; and the same goes for our infants lessons, *Sadness to Joy*, and our *Easter Prayer Spaces*. In all of these activities we seek to reconnect the children with the events which took place over 2000 years ago, to give them a sense of the miracles and beliefs surrounding the story, and some insights into the 'Good News' that the Easter story brought to people at the time and which is still celebrated by Christians today.

*Sue Evans, Schools Worker*



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# Reflections on some of our Christmas activities...

## Christmas Unwrapped



Professor Chris T Mas at Christmas Unwrapped!

"Christmas Unwrapped" is our biggest annual Christmas project, reaching 655 children from 17 different primary schools in 2019. The lesson was taught to pupils in Years 5 and 6 with the aim of 'unwrapping' the Nativity and exploring why the birth of Jesus is so significant. There were lots of fun activities along the way to bring this topic alive, including a rap, quizzes, a visit from 'Professor Chris T Mas' and biscuit decorating.

The children were encouraged to look for clues in the story regarding the Godliness of Jesus and to see that it's not a mere 'fairy story'. Highlights included children asking amazing questions (e.g. what language did the angels speak?) and others leaving the building singing the rap they had learnt!

Alison Carmichael, Schools Worker



## Darkness to Light

The team visited 8 different schools reaching over 350 infant pupils with our "Darkness to Light" sessions. We explored the Christmas story interactively with the help of 'Knitivity' characters and our friendly puppets, 'Lucy Light' and 'Frightened Freddie', who helped us to uncover both the light and dark elements of the Christmas story and what this means for us.

God was very faithful during these sessions and we had some amazing questions and comments from the children, including one who told Freddie not to be frightened anymore because Jesus came for him too!

Holly Coleman, Schools Worker



## Comments from school staff about our 'Darkness to Light' lessons:

"It was super, thank you! The children were captivated throughout."

"The pupils always enjoy this workshop and are always engaged. It has really helped to embed our RE learning."

## BSCWT at Lighting Up Brentwood

Lighting up Brentwood is an annual event that draws crowds from some distance around.



Last November, for the fourth consecutive year, we had a team of volunteers who braved the chilly conditions to run a stall promoting the work of BSCWT.

We provided displays of the Trust's work as well as a simple craft activity. While children visiting enjoyed making a Christmas decoration, the adults had time to

chat. We had useful conversations with teachers and parents alike, some wishing they were within our BSCWT area. One dad said their visit to our tent was the best part of their whole afternoon!

Olive Law, Associate Worker



## Christmas Prayer Spaces

Pupils at two primary schools (Years 5 and 6) and one specialist school were given a peaceful, slower-paced space to enable them to reflect at a deeper level on questions inspired by the Christmas story. By going on a physical journey to different zones they could contemplate the connections with their own life journey.

There were special moments when pupils respectfully shared and listened to one another's thoughts and experiences. The questions they reflected on were:

What have been difficult/good times in your life?

What would be good news?

What are you afraid of and who can help?

How do you respond to Jesus' birth?

Who needs light from dark situations?

Frances Coe, Schools Worker



## Comments from school staff about our 'Christmas Unwrapped' lessons:

"I absolutely love bringing my class each year to this workshop/presentation. It is always so well organised and delivered and the children thoroughly enjoy it."

"Lovely. The children absolutely loved the activities and participated with respect and thoughtfulness."

"The children got a lot out of the afternoon, thank you. It was great being in church."





**Pray for Schools Fortnight** is from 10th to 24th May 2020, coinciding with exam time in schools. Please pray during these two weeks for schools, students, staff, Headteachers and governors. For further information, please visit [www.prayforschools.org](http://www.prayforschools.org).

**PRAY FOR SCHOOLS**

## Secondary School lessons

**Fantasy vs Reality:** We had the privilege of taking our *Fantasy vs Reality* lessons again last term, looking at the impact and influences of pornography, with year 10 students at Shenfield High School. It has been very encouraging to see how well the lessons have gone and to be able to have some interesting conversations with students. It was also a good opportunity to have our new Schools Workers, Alison, Frances and Holly, view the lessons so that they might help deliver them in the future.



**Some students' comments on what they learned in our 'Fantasy vs Reality' lessons:**

*"That pornography can affect your heart, brain and world."*

*"That it gives an unrealistic view of love."*

*"That pornography can mentally affect you."*

*"It can have a negative impact on a person."*

**The number of students who thought pornography could be addictive rose from 29% before the lessons to 86% afterwards.**

**Bullying and Self-Concept:** This term, with the help of Holly and Fiona, I am taking some year 7 lessons exploring *Bullying and Self-Concept*. The idea is that the lessons will encourage students to think about how they view themselves and others, and to think about why. It is also a great opportunity to share how, as Christians, we believe each and every person was created by God and is amazing and valued.

**New Q&A sessions:** Next term we hope to take part in some year 8 classes, answering their questions, from a Christian viewpoint, on varying topics they have been learning about in their Social Sciences classes.

**Sex and Relationships:** Also next term, we are hoping to continue our *Sex and Relationships* lessons with year 9 students for another year.

It is encouraging to see how valued the lessons are by school staff and how keen they are to have them continue and develop.

*Rosie Graham, Schools Worker*

## Supporting 6th Form Students

We continue to have the privilege of supporting 6th Form students as part of our Chaplaincy work at Shenfield High School. Each week, Jem Trehern (Minister of Doddington Road Community Church) and I have one-to-one sessions with students from Years 12 and 13. With changes in A-Level exams, worries and exam stress are often a topic of conversation. In connection with this, later this term, Ian and I have been asked to provide an *Exam Stress Workshop* for those particularly worried about the pressure of exams and revision.

We are grateful for the opportunities to be able to sit with young people and listen to their concerns. Many are thinking ahead to major life decisions such as university offers, driving tests and apprenticeships. In an ever-changing world with its pressures and expectations, please pray for all 6th Form students across the town as they contemplate leaving the security of school life for the world beyond.

*Fiona Mason, Administrator & Schools Worker*



## Thank you to our local churches!

In advance of our Easter projects, we would like to thank the churches that are able to partner with us to host our *Easter Cracked* project and *Easter Prayer Spaces*. We couldn't do it without you!

*Gelila Melaku, Project Administrator*



## FROM THE TRUSTEES:

As I write this, we are going through the first real prolonged time of cold this winter meaning scraping of windscreens and wearing extra layers. But shortly I shall be on holiday, part of which will take me to Sydney in Australia, where it is currently their high summer and very hot. Too hot, as we have seen regularly on the news, and that nation has been in a prolonged battle with the relentless forces of nature. This has cost lives, homes, livelihoods, huge numbers of wildlife and it will take a considerable time to recover.

This made me think. Sydney is over 10,000 miles away - out of sight, out of mind - but I am about to be briefly inserted into the situation, and the tragedy will be much more real, a stark reminder that there are many things not under our control.



So where is this all leading? As you read this newsletter, Spring will be around the corner with its promise of new life and an expanding year ahead of us. Australia will be entering its Autumn and will, no doubt, be desperate to see an end to the fires.

I am mindful that the work of the Trust involves helping pupils in schools learn about Jesus and the Christian faith. It is then up to them to decide what to do with this - it is, after all, a great message of hope and promise in a world that is frequently out of control. I believe that it is vital for children and young people to have these opportunities and I thank you for all your support for the Trust as it perseveres in the work. May God bless you.

*Kevin Gilderson, Chair of Trustees*



## Thank You for Schools Work Sunday!

Thank you to all who helped local churches to celebrate *Schools Work Sunday* on Sunday 2nd February. This is a local initiative, where we pray for and raise awareness of Christian ministry in schools, not only through the work of BSCWT, but also through the Gideons, 'Open the Book' teams, church schools, Christian staff and pupils in schools and other Christian visitors too. **Next year, Schools Work Sunday will be on 7th February 2021.**

## Could you be in a Support Team?

We are currently looking to form some new 'Support Teams' to help us in the following areas:

**Human Resources (HR) Team:** to support the Trustees on issues concerning our employees and associate workers, regarding recruitment, employment law, worker support and child protection.

**Events Team:** to assist staff in the logistical planning, promotion and preparation of BSCWT events, such as the Annual Celebration (including planning any catering required).

**Fundraising Team:** to encourage fundraising activities for BSCWT's work, to explore possible funding opportunities and to make grant applications.

If you believe you have the required skills for one of these teams and would like to help, please speak to one of the Trustees, Ian Kemble or any of the Staff Team.

## Finance Update from the Treasurers & Trustees

We continue to be grateful and thankful to all individuals, churches and charitable trusts for the generous support of BSCWT working with children and young people in the schools of the Brentwood area.



To the end of December receipts were below payments by £24,000. Most of this deficit was budgeted and has been covered (£20,500) by the legacies and grants previously received. However, this has resulted in an over spend of £3,500.

As you will be aware, our salary payments and associated costs have increased significantly following the employment of additional staff.

We are now looking at the budget for 2020/2021. We look forward to your ongoing prayerful and financial support going forward.

Please pray that the current opportunities remain open and that every advantage of the privilege God has given us to communicate with the young people in our local schools will be taken and expanded.

*Peter Embling & Joe Nunn, Joint Treasurers*

## How can you be involved?

*If you are a Christian with a passion for schools, education, children and young people, and think you might be interested in being involved, please get in touch with us at the BSCWT office. Please join with us to:*

**GIVE:** BSCWT depends on the continued generosity of people who support us financially. If you'd like to support the work financially, please:

- Set up a standing order or a donation via your online banking. Please contact us for a Gift Aid Declaration form, if applicable (or download one from [www.bscwt.org/downloads](http://www.bscwt.org/downloads)).
- Contact us for a standing order mandate (or download one from [www.bscwt.org/downloads](http://www.bscwt.org/downloads)).
- Donate online at [www.give.net](http://www.give.net) or send a cheque to our office address (see front of newsletter).
- For on-line banking/standing orders, please contact the BSCWT office for our bank account details.

BSCWT is a Local  
Mission Partner of



Scripture Union

*If you no longer wish to receive communications from BSCWT, please contact us via the office at [office@bscwt.org](mailto:office@bscwt.org) to be removed from our circulations.*

**PRAY:** We believe praying for our local schools, children and young people is really important. Please contact us to:

- Request our weekly prayer email, termly prayer calendar and newsletter by email or post. Contact us at [office@bscwt.org](mailto:office@bscwt.org) or 01277 249275 or visit <https://forms.gle/VUjcfbi1QhuSNvFP6>.
- Join us for our team prayer meetings at the BSCWT office every Friday, 9.30-10.30am, during school term time.
- Start a prayer group for schools in your church or start/join a prayer group for a particular school.
- Just pray — on your own or with others!

**VOLUNTEER:** There are over 40 people who give their time and energy to volunteer with BSCWT:

- Our **Associate Workers** volunteer with us in schools, working with children and young people.
- Our **Trustees** oversee the running of the Trust.
- Our **Support teams** assist the Staff and Trustees by doing important tasks in areas such as prayer, finance, human resources, policy-writing, events, monitoring and publicity.
- Our **Church Reps** help us to liaise with our local churches.
- We are also open to applications from people interested in doing an internship or work experience with us.