

Acton Homeless Concern



Advice • Support • Hope

A.G.M. REPORT 2016

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MISSION STATEMENT FOR ACTON HOMELESS CONCERN

The Mission of Acton Homeless Concern (The Charity) is to be a living reality of God's Kingdom by respecting the dignity of the poor. The purpose of The Charity is not just to "do something for the poor", but to work in solidarity in a growing relationship which is mutually enriching.

The Charity evolved as members of the Sacred Hearts Community listened to needs expressed by the local community. This was highlighted by the many who sought food, clothing, friendship, counselling, professional advice at the church door, and who were stark reminders of the need of the church to make a practical response in the light of the Gospel.

The factors that make The Charity quite distinctive are:

- It is located at the heart of the local community
- It has been supported from the beginning by the local parish, local churches, and the local community in conjunction with Local Authority grants and grants from other providers.
- The buildings are conducive to developing friendships that extend onto the streets where clients continue to befriend and be befriended by those who work at The Charity.
- As well as providing material needs, The Charity works to change unjust structures and systems that degrade the dignity and quality of life of homeless people.
- It is a place where people feel it is all right to feel vulnerable. All are welcome.
- It is a source of networking that is accessible to the homeless where their needs are recognised and their human rights are respected.
- It acts as a political advocate for the needs of the marginalized.

Many needs are presented: lack of housing, poor accommodation, broken families, unemployment, mental illness and substance misuse etc., but The Charity is honest with itself in what it may respond to at any given time or place.

The ethos of The Charity is shaped by listening to the needy themselves, and being at the service of and in solidarity with homeless people. The spirit of The Charity is encapsulated by the following: Mission of Christ, "being sent to bring good news to the poor", befriending, empowering, transforming, social justice and truth.

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THE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Anne Gray	Chairperson
Simon Makepeace	Treasurer
Fr. John Leahy	Secretary
Mary Foster	Trustee
Vivienne Duggan	Trustee
Peter Robertson	Trustee
Karen McDonagh	Trustee
Tracey Fereirra	Co-opted Trustee
Ian Breen	Centres Manager
Maggie Hingley	Meeting Secretary

REFLECTIONS OF THE PARISH PRIEST

Fr. John Leahy SSCC Parish Priest Our Lady of Lourdes Acton



Luke 24: 13 ff.

Emmaus: They recognised him in the breaking of the bread.

On the day of the resurrection of Jesus two his disciples were leaving Jerusalem to go to Emmaus (A village 13 km from Jerusalem).

They were broken men, the dreams and hopes were crushed in the crucifixion of Jesus, they were talking about Jesus and his death when a stranger joined them. They told the stranger all that happened (to Jesus) in Jerusalem, the strangers explained to them all about Jesus in sacred scripture; about how the Messiah must suffer and die and after three days rise again. When they got back to Emmaus they insisted that the stranger stay and eat with them, which he did. They sat down at the table to eat. The stranger said the blessing and 'broke the bread'; their eyes were 'opened', they recognised Jesus in the breaking of the bread but Jesus had disappeared. The Disciples were transformed, filled with excitement joy, courage and hope. They rushed back to Jerusalem to tell the Apostles.

Emmaus House 'breaks bread with the poor' it welcomes and affirms the dignity of each person, offering hope, courage, compassion the things that are good.

What a Blessed and wonderful place.



CHOOSING MY CHARITY FOR THE YEAR

Cllr Dr Patricia Walker – Mayor of Ealing 2016/17

It is traditional in Ealing for the incoming Mayor to choose a number of Charities for which to raise funds during the Mayoral year. When I was given the honour of becoming Ealing's mayor I did not hesitate to select, not a number of charities, but one only and that is Acton Homeless Concern.

One charity fulfilling numerous functions, offering a range of services, to a wide spectrum of clients, Acton Homeless Concern stands out as the place of succour for the poor, the sick, the marginalised, the despairing and the destitute, and is an example to us all.

The causes of homelessness are myriad, complex and often interconnected and Councils and others are aware that we need to be working on prevention as well as and in concert with care.

A particular issue in Ealing however, is that two-thirds of those who sleep rough here have no recourse to public funds, such as welfare or housing benefit. In such circumstances it is extremely difficult to provide assistance to those individuals because the availability of housing in London makes identifying suitable housing even for those in receipt of public funds increasingly challenging.

Were Acton Homeless Concern a business, with more than 1300 clients in any week it would be seen as a thriving concern; that it is what it is, it's as their pamphlet recognises, a bitter indictment of the remorseless rise in homelessness across our Borough. I shall do whatever I can to work with them.

Cllr Dr Patricia Walker
Mayor of Ealing 2016/17

CENTRE MANAGERS REPORT

Ian Breen – Centres Manager

It has been another lively and busy year at Emmaus House and The Damien Centre. The numbers of services provided continue to be high and we are seeing more and more people needing help with housing problems and benefit advice.

We are lucky that the large number of volunteers offering their services in all areas of our work is at an all-time high and we are in the very privileged position of having a waiting list of people wanting to help us. We also have a lot of corporate volunteers, coming from companies who are encouraging their staff to contribute their time. This area of volunteering seems to be growing in popularity and many companies are allowing staff to do more charity days than we would have thought possible. Some companies come back on a regular basis and they are as diverse as The Disney Channel and Barclays Bank. Feedback from these companies is consistently good, all of them report a satisfying and enlightening experience which gives them an insight into homelessness and poverty.

This year we have the good fortune of being chosen as The Mayor of Ealing's Charity of the Year. We have been working closely with the mayor, Patricia Walker and her husband Laurie who are anxious to get some fund-raising events off the ground. They are also promoting our work throughout the borough. Patricia has been interested in Acton Homeless Concern for a number of years and the mayor serving lunch to clients or mopping the dining room floor is becoming a regular event in what must be a very busy year for her.

We continue to be astounded by the record amounts of donated food and clothing that we receive. We are eternally grateful to the local community, business and schools and churches for these donations. I am personally always astounded by the understanding children show to the plight of the homeless, one of my most enjoyable jobs is visiting schools, talking to the children and answering their questions

The Damien Centre has undergone some very essential building works which have resulted in a magnificent new venue for our clients and staff. We are so grateful to the donor who made this possible with a donation to cover the cost.

I have to thank my staff and volunteers who are the heart of this charity. They have had to work particularly hard this year, covering for absence due to sickness and holidays and providing additional services at Emmaus House during the Damien centre refurbishment. I watch them leave, exhausted, at the end of each day but hear them declare after every break that they are delighted to be back.

Rose, Emira, Carole, Maureen, Flavia and Kim, thank you, each and every one of you. And to Maureen, who is unwell at the moment, get well soon, we miss you.

A thousand thanks also to our small army of volunteers - where would we be without you.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF EMMAUS HOUSE - WEDNESDAY (WOMEN'S DAY)

Mary Foster Women's Day Coordinator

The doors open and the first people quickly start to arrive. First in is Annie, a lady who is almost 90 years old. She has to take two buses to get us, but she makes that enormous effort every week. She always enjoys having a cup of tea and a biscuit, but primarily she comes so she can be with the other women and children. She loves the company and Annie looks forwards to Wednesdays. It's her only trip out and the highlight of her week. Without this, she would feel very lonely and isolated. *Over 1 million people aged 65 or over in the UK (10%) say they always or often feel lonely (Age UK 2014)*

Five of the women who visit Emmaus House today have mental health issues. There's a mum who has been beaten up at a children's party in front of her own children. She is so affected by this she hasn't been back to her own home for two months. She's frightened. Scared that her attackers will come to her home. So she has chosen to endure staying at shelters and hostels instead, driven away from her normal life by fear. *In England, women are more likely than men to have a common mental health problem and are almost twice as likely to be diagnosed with anxiety disorders*

Today we also help a young pregnant woman who needs support and clothing, and also an addict, hiding from the people who want to help her. They all feel like they have nowhere else to go where they will feel safe and accepted. A young mum, who has five children, has come looking for spare food. She is running out and she isn't due any more money for days. Two of her children have special needs. We're able to offer her food and support. *There are around two million single parents in the UK - they make up a quarter of families with dependent children (Gingerbread)*

Emmaus House is a vital safe place and oasis of security and acceptance for the vast numbers of women who have come to rely on it. Each week they come, looking for a place to relax, have a chat and maybe choose themselves some new clothes or bedding. They come because we don't judge them. We listen to their stories and accept them for who they are. They feel supported and safe during times when life is tough.

Before we close up for the day, a mum arrives looking for a shirt and shoes for her son. There's a glimmer of hope for her, as her son has a job interview but they can't afford to buy him the smart clothes he needs. Another lady has a job interview herself and comes looking for a new top and shoes to help her feel well presented for this big opportunity. There is also a lady whose feet hurt and she desperately needs a pair of shoes that actually fit her and don't cause her more discomfort. Thankfully we can offer practical things like clothing, to help people like this, who just need something small that will make a big difference to them.

Every Wednesday at Emmaus House is filled with different women, different stories, different needs. But we're always here, offering hope, support and acceptance where it's needed. And each week, we close our doors at the end of the day, knowing that often just the promise of that cup of tea and a familiar friendly face, can make all the difference to a woman's week.

TRUSTEES REPORT 2016

Trustees meet on the first Wednesday of every month (except August). Between meetings various sub-committees deal with individual areas of the charity's work and operations. Trustees do not receive payment of any kind for work they carry out for the charity. This year's report has concentrated on the more important issues that have been dealt with throughout the year.

The Aims of the charity remain:

To make a further contribution in raising levels of awareness to the problems of the homeless.

To increase, wherever possible, opportunities for rehabilitation and settlement.

To improve accessibility to counselling and medical services

To enable clients to take control at levels which are acceptable to them

To ensure equality of opportunity and to promote inclusion for clients, staff and volunteers

To investigate and further utilise other supportive groups and share good practice

To provide good quality services and continuing value for money to funders and benefactors

The principal Objectives of the charity are:

Fitter healthier clients who are better equipped to deal with the problems of their lifestyles and who recognise the benefits of self-care

Inclusion for clients, creating improved confidence and social skills, appreciation of the benefits to be gained through contact with peers and trust in support groups and agencies

Earlier intervention for possible long-term health problems for the benefit of both the client and the community at large

Improved access to advice on emergency housing, drug and alcohol problems

Greater understanding and acceptance of clients and their problems amongst the local community

When setting these aims and objectives trustees have considered national strategies for this client group, the objectives of our partners and input from clients and users. Services provided to clients throughout the year include:

AT EMMAUS HOUSE

Hot lunch at midday

Distribution of clothing

Hot showers and hairdressing facilities

GP Surgery once a week, (at Brook Green Health Centre, transport arranged for clients if required)

Health checks and testing (Fortnightly Checks for HIV, Hepatitis C, Diabetes, High Blood pressure)

Exclusive Women's day once a week

Access to Optician, Dentist and Chiropodist as required

Guidance and crisis counselling including: (provided by partners):

Advice on emergency hostel accommodation

Alcohol and drug counselling

Benefits advice and assistance

Fortnightly Legal advice clinic (advice on housing, benefits and other issues)

Assistance with hospital visits, Benefit appeals and prison visits.

Irish Support and Advice (Provided by partners)

Elderly Irish support group

AT THE DAMIEN CENTRE

Breakfast and tea, coffee and sandwiches throughout the day

Opportunity to socialise and interact with peers, volunteers and staff

A safe environment to rest and relax throughout the day

Advice and referral to Emmaus House services when required

Access to advice and counselling on an informal basis.

In the year to March 2016 the charity recorded delivery of the following services:

Hot lunches at Emmaus House	45,821 (actual meals not clients)
Clothing	2050 (10,000 items of shoes and clothing distributed)
Household items	232 Requested and provided)
Showers and Haircuts	1,450
Doctor/Dentist/Optician/Chiropodist	322
Holistic Health	275
Women's Day	752
Advice Sessions	720
Damien Centre	26,788 (Breakfast and Suppers and snacks throughout the day)
Volunteer Hours	13,875

The Trustees are mindful of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit as required in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011.

FINANCE

Financial management, yet again, has been one of the main focuses for the board throughout the year. The loss of funding from the London Borough of Ealing (together with the introduction of charges for services such as parking and refuse collection that were previously free to all charities in the area) highlighted the necessity for designated funds and reserves in order that the charity can continue to deliver services to our homeless and otherwise vulnerable clients. We continue to receive funding from the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, for which we are very grateful. However, this has been reduced by almost one third over the past two years and is £30,000 for the current financial period compared to £46,000 for 2014/15. Given this volatility and the ongoing national programme of public expenditure cuts we aim to maintain an unrestricted reserve, equal to one year's operating cost, plus a provision for any emergency expenditure. This figure has been carefully assessed and agreed by trustees as a level of contingency that is necessary in order to provide continuity of services and job security for staff while other sources of funding are investigated.

GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

Our mission statement, the future direction of the charity, ensuring appropriate governance and statutory compliance, were areas examined closely by trustees throughout the year. All areas of governance were audited to ensure that the systems in place are appropriate. The Trustees have completed the process of establishing and updating a comprehensive risk policy, assessing the main risks applicable to the charity and putting in place the controls and action that needs to be taken in any situation. We will regularly monitor and assess this policy. Further development and expansion that would necessitate changes to the charity's size and structure were considered and any possible benefit to the client group assessed against probable cost. The charity operates in response to a proven, local need. Its services have grown, organically, as client need identified and in its present form it is operating successfully and within the guidelines of its mission and constitution. It is the opinion of trustees that this growth should continue but at a pace that is appropriate to good financial management, the current economic climate, current volatility of funding and with proper use of all available resources. New and more comprehensive induction and training processes are now in place for staff, volunteers and trustees with particular attention being paid to areas of child and vulnerable adult protection.

FUNDRAISING

The board has also ensured that it is familiar with newly updated codes of practice with regard to fundraising methods. We have ensured that our fundraising policy is compliant and that we operate with complete transparency and within regulations and guidelines. Employment of a professional fundraiser was investigated and costed and was deemed to be an unnecessary expense for this charity. Most fund raising events are organised "in house" by management and trustees or are carried out by organisations who recognise the charity through its work and reputation, private benefactors and donors are never approached directly and the charity does not use any methods of advertising for funds or donations. It is our intention to continue this policy for the foreseeable future as we consider it appropriate to the charity's mission and ethos.

VOLUNTEERS

We are aware of the value of the volunteer services we benefit from and we acknowledge that the charity's work would not be possible without the almost 14,000 hours we benefited from during the year. This number does not include trustees time or the time given pro-bono by companies and outreach workers. Whilst we do not place a monetary value on this help in our accounts, we do need to recognise that we would not be in a position to provide such an extensive range of services without it. We also have to acknowledge the support we receive from the local business community, the high level of pro-bono services we receive and the donations from schools and churches throughout the borough many of whom arrange fund raising events without our involvement and donate the proceeds.

In addition to our regular helpers we also have a growing number of "corporate" volunteers who visit the centres for a day and work in all areas, cooking and serving food, cleaning, decorating and supporting administration staff. We are developing many regular partners from these groups, companies who are happy to encourage their employees to return on a regular basis following their initial visit. All of these visitors comment on the positive and enjoyable experience the charity provides.

Companies who have volunteered at the charity during the year, to name a few, include:

Barclays Bank
Santander Bank
TSB Bank
XL Caitlin
BBC World Service
The Discovery Channel
The Disney Channel
Ashurst LLP
Alliance Bernstein
MaceLtd
Willis Tower

Helping to run a homeless centre in Acton *XL Caitlin Global Day of Giving*



Acton Homeless Concern is a drop-in day centre for people who are homeless or in disadvantaged situations. XL Catlin has supported the charity for a number of years through its Global Day of Giving initiative. The relationship with the organization first came about from seeing an advert in a local paper, followed by a phone call asking if the centre needed volunteers for a day. John Leonard, the Project Leader had also heard positive things from friends who had volunteered with the organization in the past.

The Global Day of Giving volunteer team assists with the delivery of food, performing odd jobs, and preparing and serving lunch to around 150 people who attend. Afterwards the team helps to wash up and clean the centre.

The centre is a busy one, estimating that 1000 people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds use its facilities every week. Its mission is to provide a caring and safe environment for the poor, the marginalized and those who suffer from isolation or are in any kind of need.

John believes the relationship has really flourished over the years. Interest in the project has consistently grown, with the number of volunteers for the most recent Global Day of Giving exceeding the number of volunteers requested.

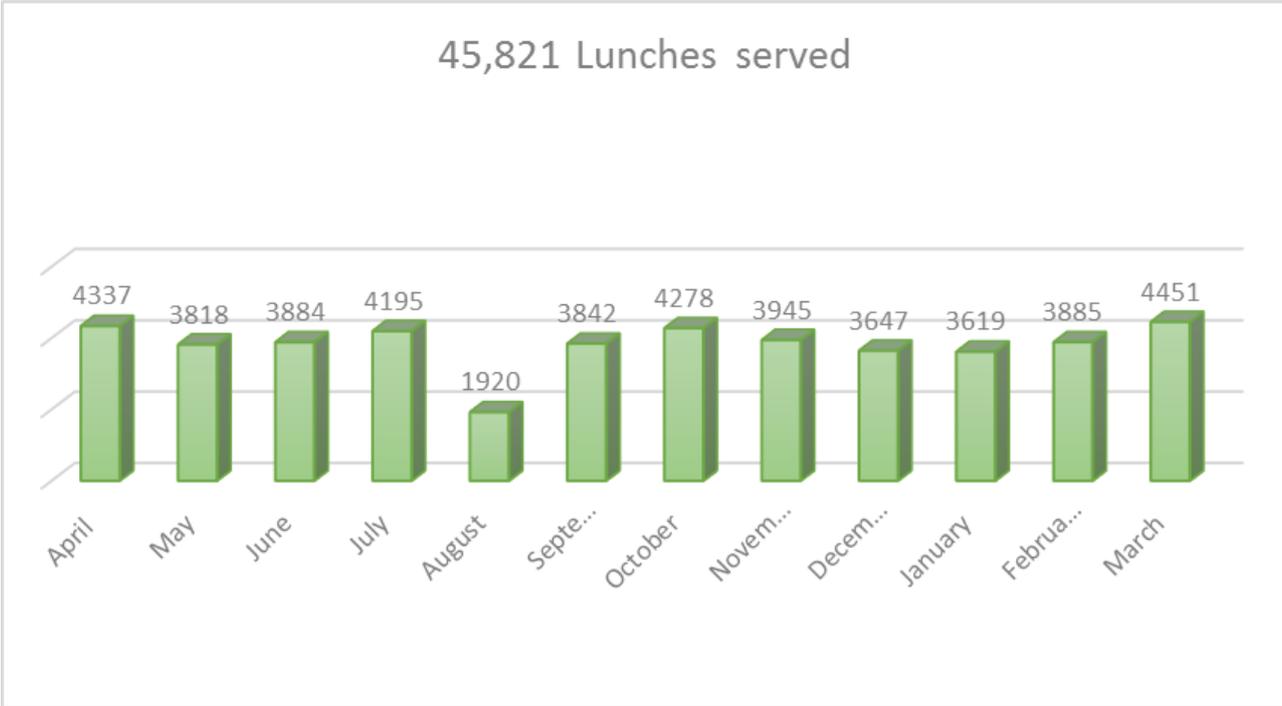
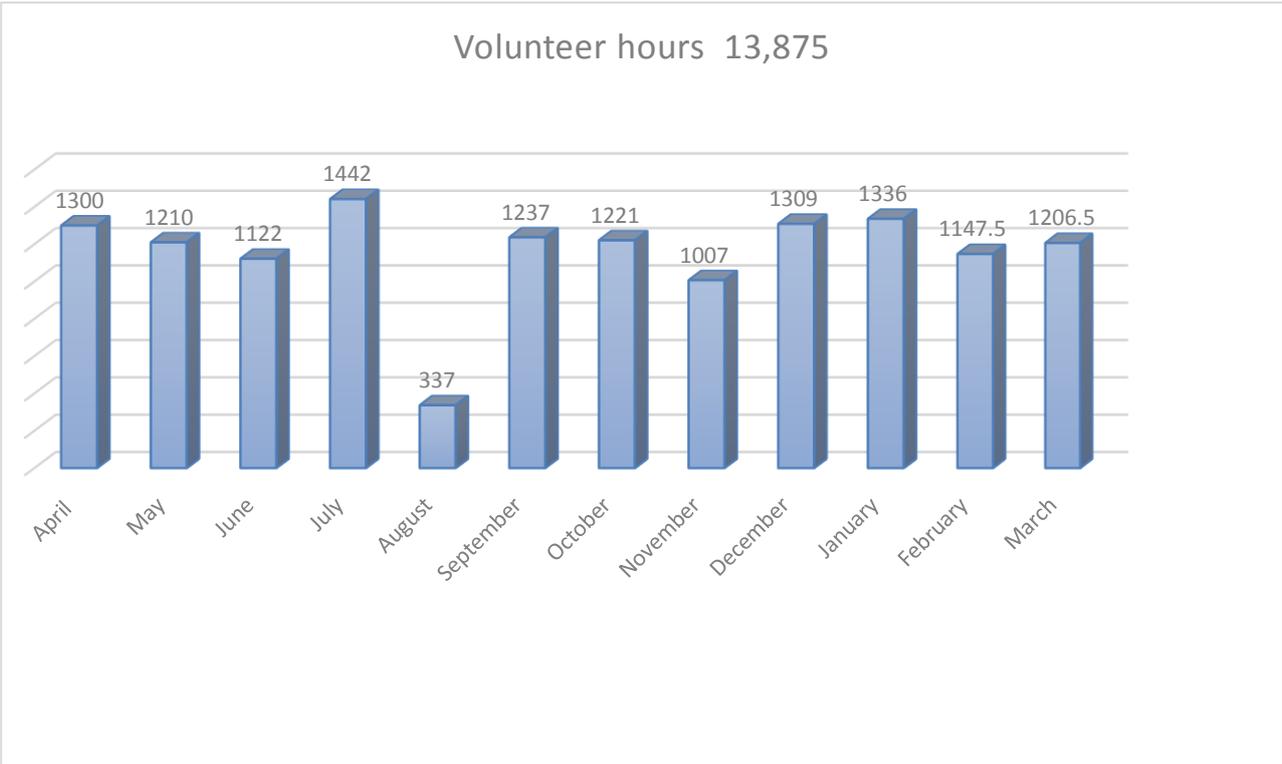
“Year on year we achieve a real ‘feel-good’ sense of warmth at the end of the day,” says John. “We feel as if we’ve really made a difference in helping people who, because of just a few wrong turns in life, have ended up on the street.”

“As a Project Leader I’ve gained many things – confidence, team work, organizational skills, and the opportunity to get to know my fellow colleagues better,” he adds. “And the experience also makes all of us take a step back and appreciate what we have, rather than taking it for granted.”

***SOME OF OUR CORPORATE VOLUNTEER
SHOWING HOW ITS DONE!***



Thank you from all of us to every one of you.



THANK YOU

Acton Homeless Concern would like to acknowledge and offer it's thanks to the many

**organisations and individuals who have supported us throughout the year
But most importantly the long list of working volunteers because without you we could not do
it at all – you know who you are**

For their financial support:

The Emigrant Support Programmes
Irish Department of Foreign Affairs
The London Irish Vintage Club
The Batchworth Trust
The Wilmington Trust
The Sacred Hearts Congregation in Ealing
The Parish of Our Lady of Lourdes in Acton
The Parish of Our Lady of Grace and St Edward in Chiswick
The Catholic community of Great Missenden
The Roscommon Solstice Choir

For donations of food throughout the year:

Marks and Spencer PLC
Sainsbury's PLC
Tesco PLC
Fareshare
City Harvest
The Felix Project
Freshways Dairy - Acton
Mrs McCloud and her daughter Carmen
And Ravi for his parcels of support

Some of Our Corporate Volunteers:

Benefacto
Barclays Bank
Santander Bank
TSB Bank
The Top Hat Cleaners - Chiswick
Fox Hall Restaurant - Chiswick
XL Caitlin
BBC World Service
The Discovery Channel
The Disney Channel
Mace Ltd
Alliance Bernstein
Willis Tower
Ashurst LLP

Schools and Churches

St Vincent's School
Sacred Heart High School,
Mount Carmel School,
St Augustine's Priory School,
Greenside School,
St Mary's Church,
St Peter & Paul Church,
Berrymead Evangelical Church,
West London Islamic Centre,
St Andrew's Reform Church,
Chiswick Catholic Centre,
Little Company of Mary Sisters,
Saint Vincent De Paul Society – Amersham,
The London Buddhist Vihara – Chiswick.

For their fund raising events:

Jim Scully who once again organised a great fund raising dance – Definitely not the last!

Ciaran Casey and Tommy James for the annual golf day This year was the best ever!

Maurice and Audrey Long for their ongoing support of our Christmas celebrations.

Sr. Helen Bosquette for the wonderful fundraising event with the Roscommon Solstice Choir – Successful beyond all our expectations!

The countless people who rattled buckets in the cold on street collection day. They have worked even harder in the past two years and collected as much money in one weekend as they previously did in two

SERVICES AT EMMAUS HOUSE (020 89925768)

Meals	Alternate Sunday/Monday, Tuesday to Friday. 11.45-2.00 pm
Clothing	Wednesday (Women and children) 12noon-2.00 pm Thursday (Men) 11.45-1.30 pm and on request in an emergency
Showers	Tuesday to Friday 12noon-2.00 pm Wednesday (Women only) - 12noon-2.00 pm
On request Barber/Hairdresser	Every Thursday 12noon-1.30 pm
Chiropodist	Last Friday of the month 12noon-2.00 pm
Doctor/ Health Check	on request
Optician	2nd Wednesday of the month 12noon-2.00 pm
Women & Children's Group	Wednesday at No.3 Berrymead Gardens Wednesday 12noon-2.00 pm
Alcohol/Drug Counsellor	Tuesday 12 noon-2.00 pm
Dentist	on request
AA meetings	Saturday (Emmaus House) 11.00 am Thursday (Emmaus House) 7.00 pm
Homelessness	Advice and referral on request
Irish Advocacy	Friday (every 2 weeks) 12noon-2.00pm
Holistic treatments	Friday 9.00-12noon at No. 3 Berrymead Gardens

SERVICES AT THE DAMIEN CENTRE: (020 8993 6096)

Breakfast in the morning	Monday to Friday 9.00-12noon
Light meals in afternoon	Monday to Friday 2.00-6.00 pm Thursday: 2.30-6.00 pm
Saint Mungo's Rough Sleepers	12noon-2.30 every Wednesday

Art Class
(Parish Hall St Mary's Church)
Thursdays 2.00-5.00 pm

Computer classes
(Parish Hall St Mary's Church)
Tuesday 2.00-5.00 pm

Music sessions
(Parish Hall St Mary's Church)
Tuesday 2.00-5.00 pm



AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA AGUS TRÁDÁLA NA hÉIREANN
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE OF IRELAND

***ACTON HOMELESS CONCERN (Emmaus House and Damien Centre) 1 Berrymead Gardens, London W3 8AA
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