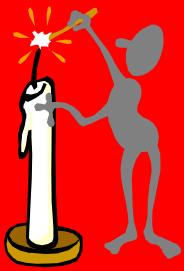


"It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness"



CANDL Light

Church and Neighbourhood Development in London



June 2003



PARAGON CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

A Hackney school with a difference! page 2.

'Alpha Supper' Kid's Style



Congratulations to the children and organisers of the Alpha Community learning and mentoring workshops, "Solid as a Rock", on a splendid presentation of work and a superb meal, which took place on Friday 30th May, at 'Josef's House', a dedicated learning centre for children based in Lee, London SE12. Both parents and children packed the place and enjoyed a fun-filled night, with entertainment provided by guests.

The objective of the evening was to provide parents with the opportunity to view the tremendous efforts put in by the children who had had the opportunity to participate in five

(Continued on page 4)

What's inside this issue?

◆ PCA 'A School With A Difference!' – page 2.	◆ Managing A Lay Worker – page 7.
◆ Funding News – page 3.	◆ What was the GOAL? – page 7.
◆ Child Safety Week – page 5.	◆ 'Praxis Makes Perfect' – Hosting Asylum Seekers page 8.
◆ Parenting Teenagers – page 6.	◆ And inserts galore!!!



The Paragon Christian Academy Choir



Dr Chambers congratulates graduands
Anna Chambers and Eunice Bolus



Senior School Drama Group

Paragon Christian Academy

A School With A Difference

It was Wednesday 15 January 2003, the date sticks in my mind because it was the day after the murder of PC Stephen Oake, a Christian and active member of Poynton Baptist Church in Cheshire. Dr Albert Chambers, international evangelist, founder and senior minister of World Vision for Christ, and Pastor of Paragon Chapel (Glyn Rd, E5) held his audience with his soft but firm words.

A vivid comparison between the family of the slain policeman and a family of a youth in the audience brought home the reality of the pain and anguish of the tragedy. Dr Chambers pointed out that **“Just becoming a Christian does not exempt us from the pressures of life.”** He reminded us that **“It is necessary to commit all our ways to God.”**, and that **“Life is very fragile and we need to have the presence of God with us, and in the course of life we must learn how to die to the glory of God.”** This was not an evangelistic tent meeting or a Sunday sermon – this was the afternoon assembly at Paragon Christian Academy.

Paragon Christian Academy is a small Independent Christian school with a big idea. The big idea is that children learn more efficiently at

their own individual pace, and that they should be taught according to “biblical principles”. Using a popular American system called **Accelerated Christian Education (ACE)** Paragon Christian Academy provides an individualised learning curriculum for all of its 47 students.

The church sanctuary serves as the main teaching area, but this space cannot properly be described as a traditional classroom. Instead of desks facing a black or white board, the young students each have their own cubicles, known as offices. The offices are made to a special design which is adhered to by all schools using the ACE curriculum.

Each cubicle has two small flag holders, one for the Union Jack, and the other for a Christian flag representing Paragon Christian Academy. These flags are part of a system for gaining the attention of the supervisor. When the Union Jack is displayed it is sign to the supervisor that the student wishes to have some work marked or needs to go to the toilet. When the Christian flag is displayed it means that the student needs some help with his or her work.

School uniforms are compulsory, although seniors are allowed to

wear more casual attire along with a school sweat shirt. Discipline is strict, and parents are fully included in the disciplinary process.

On entry to the school each student is given a diagnostic test in each subject to ascertain the level at which to start his or her ACE learning programme. Students are not allowed to progress from one stage to another until all the targets of the current stage are met. In this way not only are the brightest children catered for but also those with special needs. Core subject include: English, Mathematics, Science, Word Building, and Social Studies. In addition there are elective such as: French, Spanish, Astronomy and even Auto-mechanics.

The ACE curriculum leads to its own equivalent to GCSE, called the National Christian Schools Certificate (NCSC). The NCSC is accepted by universities in the UK and abroad (including Oxford University), as an alternative to the usual GCSE and GCSE ‘A’ level route (see the UCAS Handbook).

Paragon Christian Academy started eleven years ago with just seven children, all from Dr Chamber’s

(Continued on page 3)

Funding News

The Jack Petchey Foundation

If you are a project working with young people aged 11-25 in Hackney or Tower Hamlets, The Jack Petchey Foundation offers grants for Achievement Awards for individuals who make valuable contributions to their club, school, community projects. Grants of £200 are made to spend on a particular project for their organisation. Project grants of £500-50,000 for charities enabling individuals to achieve their potential and contribute to society as a whole.

For further information visit www.jackpetcheyfoundation.org.uk or tel. 02082528000

The Shine Trust

Shine supports educational initiatives in Greater London which encourages underachieving children and young people aged 7-18 to raise their achievement levels.

Organisations need to demonstrate they are well managed, work with other local agencies and provide venues and services open and accessible to all. Most grants are over £20000.

For further information visit www.shinetrust.org.uk or tel 0208393

Camelot Foundation

Are you a group working with young parents or those at risk of becoming young parents; young asylum seekers; young people with mental health problems; young disabled people. The next deadline to apply for a grant is 30 June.

For further info tel.: 0207828 6085 or visit www.camelotfoundation.org.uk

Unity Bank

Have you considered buying your premises? Unity Bank have developed a Rent to Buy funding scheme specifically tailored for the voluntary sector which provides up to 100% of the finance an organisation needs to buy property, through a simple combination of a traditional mortgage topped up by the bank's equity stake.

Details on 0800 783 9650, rent2buy@unitygroup.co.uk (quote (RTB03))

Henry Smith's Charity

A new fast response programme with decisions every two weeks gives up to £10000 to organisations with an income of less than £250,000 for capital or revenue purposes.

Contact Smith's Charity 5 Chancery Lane, Clifford Inn, EC4A 1BU for information on how to apply.

Wates Foundation

The Foundation aims to support projects in Greater London that benefit the deprived and disadvantaged, including community, arts, education and environment projects and those that promote Christianity and moral values and inter-faith relations.

For further information visit www.watesfoundation.org.uk or tel. 020 8764 5000

(Continued from page 2)

family. The concern was twofold. Firstly, the family were concerned with the level of performance of the state education system. Secondly, there was the question "Why should we have the world teach our children?" This was the question that Dawn Chambers posed at Paragon Christian Academy's first ever graduation ceremony in February; a ceremony which saw the graduation of those very first students from over a decade ago.

Of those first students Anna Chambers has been accepted at

Writtle College to read Equine Studies and is the youngest student in the college studying the subject. Christopher Lynch, at 16, was accepted by Greenwich University to read Medicine, but has chosen London University instead, and starts in October at just 17 years of age. Aaron Chambers has completed studies at City & Islington College reading Computer Graphics and Art & Design; he has now launched his own business. Jonathan Ford is studying Accountancy at East Ham College.

Being an Independent school,

Paragon Christian Academy does charge fees, but even they are something of a miracle. This is only possible through the commitment of all the staff, especially the volunteers, who see their work not as a job, but as a ministry. All staff are given Accelerated Christian Education Teacher Training, and a number of part time volunteers are former students.

For further information: Call Mrs Jenny Lynch (The Principal, Paragon Christian Academy) on (020) 8985 1119, or Christian Education Europe on (01793) 783783.

(Continued from page 1)



Award Winners at the Alpha Community Project

workshop areas. These were Dance and Drama, Cookery, Computing, Arts and Crafts, and Gardening, which happened over a period of 4 weeks.

The work of the children from each workshop was on display. There were beautifully designed menus on the dinner tables of the final celebration event, which had been designed in the Computer workshop, napkins and stencilled table cloths from Arts and Crafts, delicious food from the Cookery group and first class entertainment from the Dance and Drama group. The Gardening group also were not to be out done with their well-made hanging baskets and potted displays, which were presented as gifts to the parents at the end of the evening.

There was an air of excitement in every room where the children had their work on display. From the Arts and Crafts group there were beautiful cushions, photo frames and a wonderful range of stencilled napkins, which complimented two beautiful tablecloths that the group had made, with the support of Sis Pauline Sewell and Sis Pat Brown. During her feedback talk on how the four weeks of workshops had been Sister Pauline, with great enthusiasm, implored the children's parents to do all they could to keep the children's zeal in arts and crafts sustained. Her point was reinforced by the Cookery group's showpiece – a beautifully carved out watermelon filled with an exotic fruit cocktail produced by Tristran Simms. It looked terrific and tasted delicious!

Alpha Community group is the community project of Alpha Apostolic Church Lewisham. They are working with the Black and Minority Ethnic Community to raise confidence and academic achievement for the children from these communities, with a small grant from the Supplementary School Support Service. However, without the significant volunteer input, the

mentoring and learning workshops would have never been such a huge success. There was a strong team of committed volunteers (Pastor David Chambers, Sonia Chambers, Pauline Sergeant, Pat Gordon, Pauline Sewell, and Pat Brown), who are to be commended for their efforts, and who have provided another lasting testament to the value of volunteers for church and community projects.

It was impressive to see how the learning had been made relevant to life as it was incorporated into every part of the evening, very noticeable was the effort which had gone into developing the children's ability to communicate well and model the attributes of good citizenship as they attended with concern and interest to host and serve their guests.

There is no doubt that the 'Alpha Supper' was the first but most certainly not the last event for this group.



FACING THE UNTHINKABLE *Child Abuse and the Church*

A specially designed seminar run by **Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service** for all those working with children in churches and other organisations.

Sat 9th August 2003 10.30pm - 3.45pm
Lighthouse Fellowship, 133 Rye Lane,
SE15 4ST

Thurs 18th Sept 2003 10.30pm - 3.45pm
All Hallows Church, Chertsey Rd,
Twickenham

Sat 1st Nov 2003 9.15am - 1.30pm
Diocesan House, 36 Causton Street, SW1P
4AU

The cost is **£15.00** (including a workbook, value £3.00), with 1 free place for every 5 booked. If you can't manage the full fee PCCA will accept whatever you can afford.

Send your booking giving the date and venue you want to attend, your name, address, and telephone number to PCCA, PO Box 133 Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ.



Child Safety Week

23 - 29 June 2003

Accidents are the biggest killer of children and young people in the UK and cause thousands of serious injuries to them every year. They can be reduced through advocating change in legislation, improving product design, creating child friendly environments and through better knowledge of how children's accidents are caused.

What is Child Safety Week?

Child Safety Week is an annual initiative of Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT) aiming to increase the awareness and understanding of children's accidents and their prevention. The next Child Safety Week will be 23 - 29 June 2003.

Child Safety Week assists practitioners by providing information materials to help promote child safety. Each year a different approach or theme is chosen to encourage active participation and to promote child safety in an interesting way.

The 2003 Theme

"One moment changes everything."

The message is: "Accidents happen in seconds but the effects can last a lifetime. Take action now for child safety"

Aims of Child Safety Week

- To provide clear and accurate safety information
- To persuade local communities to take part in child safety activities
- To encourage the media to provide positive coverage for child injury prevention and child safety issues.

Who is Child Safety Week aimed at?

CAPT aims to involve anyone interested in child safety, including:

- parents and carers
- young people and children
- practitioners who work in safety, such as environmental health officers, road safety officers and trading standards officers
- health and education practitioners, including teachers, nurses and health visitors
- government departments responsible for health, education, employment, consumer safety, the environment and transport
- manufacturers of baby equipment and children's clothes
- retailers

How can you get involved?

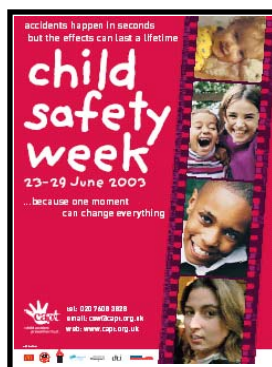
Local Child Safety Week initiatives

Practitioners can organise Child Safety Week activities and events in their local communities and generate coverage in local media, including television and radio. CAPT supports regional activity through offering Planning Days and puts participants in contact with each other so that they can share ideas.

National Child Safety Week initiatives

CAPT prepares and distributes resources to practitioners and the public, organises a national media launch and generates media coverage in national press, radio and television. We also evaluate the national impact of each Child Safety Week to measure its strengths and weaknesses. This helps us to plan and improve each Child Safety Week.

Child Safety Week Resources



Every year resources for the Week are extended and updated. For each Child Safety Week we produce an Ideas Booklet and a poster which are sent to anyone interested in organising an activity, event or long-term campaign. They are available for downloading below. Additional leaflets, posters, stickers and other resources are available and can be purchased directly from CAPT.

Parenting Teenagers

You may recall the outcry from some commentators when Patricia Amos was jailed for 60 days for allowing her daughter to miss school; Patricia was released early on appeal, but reactions to the case rumbled on for many months. One of the positive outcomes of the publicity given to the case was that of the difficulty of parenting teenagers, and the lack of help and support that many parents feel when their children reach this critical stage, was highlighted.

In September 2002, an organisation called 'Get Connected', which runs a helpline for teenagers offering information, help and support, published a report entitled 'Nowhere to turn'. 'Get Connected' based their research on interviews with 510 teenagers and 510 parents of teenagers, comparing the things with which the young people were concerned, with the subjects that their parents *thought* their children were concerned about.

The results were interesting! It was clear that getting their relationships right was a major problem for teenagers; one third of those interviewed felt that was the biggest problem they faced, followed by issues connected with drugs, (19%) bullying (13%) and pregnancy and sex (10%) Altogether twelve different subjects received 3% or more responses, illustrating the wide range of problems that young people face; it is clearly wrong to assume that all teenagers are the same!!

Perhaps the most interesting result of the survey was that it found that

parents still have little idea about the problems their teenagers face.



Parents considerably overestimate the significance of drugs in the life of their teenagers; nearly half of parents believed this was the most significant problem, with only 19% of teenagers feeling the same, whereas only 7% of parents believed bullying to be significant, whilst it was a major concern for double that number of teenagers.

So, where does all this leave teenagers and their parents? And what about those churches and other organisations that want to help?

The challenge to parents is to learn



to communicate effectively, giving their views sensitively and appropriately, whilst gently 'teasing' relevant information out of their teenagers. Parents must learn not to be 'nosey', but find ways to keep the lines of communication open!

One parent I know was having

difficulty finding out where her daughter was going in the evenings, and with whom. If she asked too many questions, then she was accused of interference, and a lack of trust, but the mother was concerned that, should her daughter not come home one evening, she would have no idea where she had been, whom she had been with, or even what she was wearing. (This particular teenager was an expert at getting out of the house, dressed outrageously, without her parents seeing her!) Finally it was decided that the teenager would write down all the relevant details and leave them in a sealed envelope, which would only be opened in an emergency. Both 'sides' got what they wanted, and no pride was hurt.

How can churches support teenagers and their parents? Offer space and time for parents to get together as a group, and offer the same to their teenagers. There are a number of parenting courses available; you will find them listed on page 7 (opposite). If you want support and advice, then contact the CANDL office.

There are also helplines for both parents and teenagers – why not advertise them on your church or organisation's notice board, or in your front window and give someone the job of keeping the information up to date?

Perhaps if we can encourage effective communication between parents and teenagers, *and* encourage the community to take these difficulties seriously, parents like Patricia Amos may find the help and support they need.



By Margaret Collins
Family Life & Parenting Support Worker

COMMUNITY FUND
 Lottery money making a difference

Managing A Lay Worker

You've done all the work, you've raised the money, you've set up a management committee... you even managed to find an excellent worker for your new community project. There isn't really anything left to do -- except of course managing your new worker.

And this, of course, is when the really interesting work begins. The worker might not turn out to be the perfectly gifted wonderful human being they seem to be at interview. You might find that you're not the patient, wise employer you thought you were.

It is fairly certain that you will face unexpected challenges, which do, as they say require a steep learning curve.

In CANDL we are very well aware of the joys and benefits a new lay worker can bring into a church and/or community project, but we are also aware of the way it can bring problems and change the dynamics of what seemed like a well-settled and well functioning organisation.

For this reason we are considering running a training session for people who are employing or considering employing a lay worker in their church. It will be

an opportunity for you to bring your issues, get practical advice and learn about what works and what doesn't.

Although we don't have all the answers we believe that by sharing experiences and learning from the accumulated wisdom of good practice much can be gained and familiar problems avoided.

If this sounds relevant to you get in touch with James Ashdown at 020 729-9701 or online at James.Ashdown@Barnardos.org.uk. Your feedback will help us know whether such session is needed and what kind of focus it should take.



GOAL (Governance, Openness, Accountability, Leadership) was a conference organised by the Evangelical Alliance and the African Caribbean Evangelical Alliance to look at the topics in the title, at the conference. Speakers from the charity commission law firms and inland revenue spoke on these subjects. There were an estimated 150 – 250 delegates gathered at Ruach ministries in Brixton Hill.

Since media coverage of two Black Majority churches having receiver managers appointed by the charity commission the issue of governance has become a hot topic.

The conference was opened by a speaker from

the EA and ACEA followed by a very stimulating talk on What is the Church by the General Director of the EA Joel Edwards. With wit and humour Joel had the audience enthralled with his presentation of a church which belonged to Jesus but was outward looking and engaging with issues for and on behalf of the wider community.

The speakers who followed all added their opinions and expertise to the topic headings:-

- **What does the law require or are you a rebel**
- **On the couch**
- **Trusting trustees**
- **Scandalous leadership**

- **Is the charity commission undermining leadership in the church**
- **Taxation – a necessary evil**
- **The future of the charity sector**

It was however unfortunate that there were so many speakers, as this limited the time for questions and perhaps workshops on some of the issues facing churches. But there was a promise from Mary Cridge at the Charity Commission, who explained she is keen to work with the EA and ACEA and others to develop model constitutions for Evangelical churches.

Parenting Courses & Information

'The Flat Pack Parent' Family Matters Institute (01767 41002)

'What is a parent to do?' Family Caring Trust (028 3026 4174)

'Dads and Lads' YMCA/Care for the Family (01244 403090)

'Where to look for help: a guide for parents and carers of teenagers' written by Brigid McConville, pub by the Trust for the Study of Adolescence (01273 693311)

'Closing the gap' written by Jay McGraw, pub by Simon and Schuster

'The terrible teens' written by Kate Figs, pub by Viking

'Confident teens' written by Gael Lindenfield pub by HarperCollins

'Get Connected': free helpline for teenagers 0808 808 4994 web site: www.getconnected.org.uk

'Parentline': free helpline for anyone in a parenting role 0808 800 2222 web site: www.parentlineplus.org.uk

NEW TAX CREDITS

Are you claiming?

Which Tax Credits?

In April, Working Family Tax Credit and Children's Tax Credit were replaced by two new tax credits. You may have seen the publicity in the media at the time; since April, concern has been voiced that those entitled to the credits are not claiming them, due mainly to the fact that it all seems very complicated. Always up for a challenge, here is CANDL's attempt to unravel the information that is out there, in the hope that those who are entitled to this money will in fact receive it!

What are they called?

The two new tax credits are known as Child Tax Credit, and Working Tax Credit. They are part of the government's programme for tackling poverty, and making work pay. Generally, to apply for tax credits you must be aged 16 or over, and live in the United Kingdom.

So, who are the new tax credits

for?

Child Tax Credit is for people who are responsible for at least one child under 16, or one young person who is 16, 17 or 18, but is studying at school or college for at least 12 hours per week. It is paid directly to the person who is mainly responsible for the care of the child or children, usually the mother.

Working Tax Credit is for people who are in paid work, either as an employee of someone else, or else as a self-employed worker. Single people, married couples living together, and a man and woman living together as if they were married can claim.

People who are responsible for a child or young person can claim Working Tax credit if:

- You are 16 or over, and work at least 16 hours a week

People without children can claim Working Tax credit if:

- You are over 25 and work at least 30 hours a week

- You are 16 or over, and work at least 16 hours a week, and have a disability which puts you at a disadvantage in getting a job
- You or your partner are 50 or over, work at least 16 hours a week, and are returning to work after a period of unemployment

How much will I get? (Now it really does get complicated!!)

Child Tax Credit

There are two 'elements' in the Child Tax Credit.

The first is the family element, and is payable to all families earning up to £50,000 per year.

- The basic rate is £545 per year.
- If you have a child under the age of one the rate is £1,090.

For every £ earned over £50,000, the rate is decreased correspondingly.

(Continued on page 11)

Remember Babyfather?



Did you come to the Babyfather evenings in Poplar or Clapham?
Did you read the article in the last CANDL Light?

Do you want to follow up some of the issues that arose?

A Babyfather group for men is starting on July 7th at Bonneville Christian Centre in Clapham. It is hoped that Patrick Augustus (the founder of the Babyfather Alliance) will be there to support the group in its initial stages, and that those who come will be able to discuss their concerns and offer support to each other.

Interested? Want more details? Contact us here at CANDL or Errol John at Barnardo's (020 8551 0011)

PRAYER FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

towards an ecumenical network of prayer

7.30 – 8.30pm
Thursday 10 July 2003

This month's theme:
Building Peace

St Monica's Church
19 Hoxton Square, N1

Services on different themes every other month. For further details, or if you wish to be kept informed : Call Alan Everett on 020 729 4440 or email: alan@n16.org.uk

ALL WELCOME

Jobcentre Plus Produces Faith Communities Toolkit

Jobcentre Plus in London, East of England and the South East has developed a Toolkit which will provide Jobcentre Plus people with information about the main faith communities in the UK.

The Toolkit has been developed through consultation with faith communities and Jobcentre Plus people and is part of work to develop partnerships with a wide range of organisations and groups that represent Jobcentre Plus customers and delivery partners to ensure that Jobcentre Plus services meet the needs of those they are designed to help.

The Toolkit includes:

- 1 reasons why Jobcentre Plus Districts and faith communities can benefit from forming partnerships;

- 2 background information on religions and beliefs;
- 3 the when, who and how of contacting faith communities; and
- 4 ideas for partnership activities appropriate to faith communities and Jobcentre Plus Districts.

The Toolkit was piloted in Tower Hamlets and Luton and partnership activities developed with faith communities during these pilots include:

- Jobcentre Plus publicity made available in faith centres;
- a vacancy board set up at a worship centre;
- job matching for course completers from faith-based projects;
- information sessions at faith-based organizations;

- development of a Minority Ethnic Outreach project; and
- identification of new intermediaries (non-contracted partners or providers who assist Jobcentre Plus customers with their job search and/or provide a matching service).

The Toolkit was launched on 5 June and is being introduced across the three Regions by District Business Development teams. This will involve Toolkit awareness training, visits to faith communities, development of partnerships and mainstreaming of the Toolkit.

Faith communities wanting to discuss partnership with Jobcentre Plus should contact the Business Development Manager in their Jobcentre Plus District. Details can be found at: www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk.

Is Your Directory Entry Up to Date and Web Enabled?

If your organisation is featured in the CANDL directories of religious groups and organisations or is included in our database you should have, by now, received a questionnaire/consent form for your up-to-date listing on the forthcoming CANDL online directory.

The new online directory will be an enormously beneficial resource for all.

However, the Data Protection Act precludes CANDL from listing any organisation on our forthcoming web based directory that has not completed and returned to

us the questionnaire/ consent form that was mailed out last month.

If you have not yet done so, "*I beseech you by the mercies of God*" to complete and return the questionnaire/consent form immediately. With your help and co-operation

we can have this powerful resource up and running before the end of the year.

For more information call: Revd George Hargreaves at CANDL on 020 7729 9701 or email: george.hargreaves@barnardos.org.uk.

New to CANDL?

Want to know more about the service we offer? Need an update?

Following the success of our Open Day in May, we are to hold another on **Thursday July 10th**. Come along and talk to the Project Workers, browse through our extensive resources, and network with other similar groups or individuals. We will even throw in a **free lunch!**

For more details call Margaret Collins on 020 7729 9701

CANDL Conference 2004
Venue wanted!!!

**COMMUNITY
FUND**
Lottery money making a difference

Can you offer?

- A warm, welcoming building
- A main hall, large enough to seat 100-150 delegates
- Smaller rooms to accommodate workshops
- Reasonable access by public transport/parking

CANDL is organising a major national conference in March 2004 with the title "Changing Families". The conference will aim:

1. To inform community and church leaders of current family life issues, and how they may develop in the future
2. To explore what this means for the church in the community
3. Through workshops, to offer practical help to churches and communities that will facilitate community development enhancing the quality of life for children, young people and families.
4. To make recommendations to both local and national governmental authorities as to future policy.
5. To highlight the work done by churches within the community, and to extend the national and local profiles of such work

If you would like more information, please contact:

Margaret Collins, at CANDL on 020 7729 9701, or margaret.collins@barnardos.org.uk

New!! New!! New!! New!!

"Developing your Fundraising Strategy"

Are you interested in knowing why it is important
to have a fundraising strategy?

Would you like help in developing your group's
fundraising strategy?

Find out what resources are available for
your group to draw on!

Want to know how?

CANDL has developed 5 core courses to help groups strengthen their structures. We are offering members the opportunity to participate in the first of these exciting half-day courses. We will be delivering "Developing your Fundraising Strategy" on **17th September**.

Watch out for more details coming your way!

Praxis Makes Perfect

A Solution To The Young Asylum Seeker's Accommodation Problem



Neil Amas (Praxis UK Community Service Manager) and Rene Mugenzi (Praxis Hosting Scheme Co-ordinator)

As the tabloid press continue to stir up fears regarding Asylum Seekers, and teenage pregnancies among young asylum seekers rising at an alarming rate; Praxis, a voluntary organisation established in 1983 and located in Bethnal

Green, East London, is offering a unique and practical solution to the question of accommodation for young Asylum Seekers – 'Hosting'.

The Praxis Hosting scheme was established in 1998 when it was initially designed to provide temporary accommodation for single adult asylum seekers referred by local authorities. However, in response to an increasing need The Praxis Hosting Scheme now provides its services exclusively to local authorities who have statutory obligations to separated and asylum seeking children under Section 17 of the Children's Act 1989, and the Children Leaving Care Act 2000.

After a young asylum seeker is referred to the Hosting Scheme there are three main steps that follow. Firstly there is 'Reception into the service provision'. This involves a Praxis Hosting Scheme member, with an interpreter if necessary, making arrangements to transport and accompany the young asylum seeker to their new accommodation, introduce them to their host family and make them feel welcome. Once settled the second step is taken – The Induction. The young person is introduced to their scheme key worker and any host family house rules are explained, and a brief introduction to facilities in the surrounding community is given.

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 8)

The second 'element' is the child element, and is payable to all families earning up to £13,230 per year.

- The basic rate is £1,445
- The rate is £2,155 if your child is disabled
- The rate is £3,020 if your child is severely disabled

For every £ earned over £13,000, the rate is decreased accordingly.

Working Tax Credit

Working Tax Credit is made up of six different 'elements'. (We told you it was complicated!)

- A basic adult element of £1,525 per year
- An extra element of £1,500 per year which is paid to single parents and couples
- An extra element of £620 per year if you and your partner work a total of 30 hours a week or more

- An extra element of £2,040 per year which is paid if you or your partner have a disability
- An extra element of £865 per year if you or your partner are severely disabled
- A childcare element which is paid to help households who spend money on childcare

(Still with us?)

A couple or lone parent responsible for at least one child, working between 16 and 30 hours a week, with a gross joint income of £5 000 could expect a basic yearly payment of approximately £3, 025. If they worked for over 30 hours a week, they could expect a payment of approximately £3, 645.

With a joint income of £12,500, they could expect payments of £250 and £895 per year.

A single person aged 25 or over, not responsible for a child, and an income of £5,000, could expect a

basic yearly payment of £2,145, whilst a couple could expect £3, 645. With incomes of £10,000 they could expect payments of £320 and £1820 per year.

You will need to know what you earned in the year 2001/2002, as the amount you receive will be based on that. If you work for an employer, the amount should be on your P60 End of Year certificate; if you are self-employed, you need to give the income amount that you put on your tax form for 2001/2002.

You can phone for a form (0845 300 3900), or you can apply on-line.

YOU MUST APPLY BY JULY 6TH, OR YOU WILL LOSE YOUR ENTITLEMENT FOR THIS YEAR!!!!

If you would like some help with your application or more advice, then just get in touch with us here at CANDL, and we will do our best to help you.

(Continued from page 11)

After a few days a further induction takes place which gives details of the local community, cultural links, language courses, details of personal allowance payments and an opportunity to discuss personal needs.

The third and possibly the most important step is the 'Assessment and "Personal Plan" design'. After the young asylum seeker is placed with a host family dates and times for needs' assessment and follow-up meetings to design a "Personal Plan" are arranged. The "Personal Plan" covers 8 key areas: health, independent living skills, language acquisition, education, social inclusion and cultural needs, legal issues, family tracing, and an exit strategy to independent living.

The host families, for their part, undergo rigorous 'Family and Home Assessment' involving an evaluation, conducted by a Hosting Scheme staff member at Praxis, of childcare experience, appreciation of diversity and ability to empathise the effect of loss, and assessment of space, communal facilities and health and safety standards. There are also Criminal records Bureau checks, Local Authority Checks, GP health report and Department of Health checks (where

necessary), a School report on school age children, a Health visitor report on pre-school age children (where necessary), and satisfactory references from 2 referees. Host families are



Amina Mireh
(Praxis's Somali Women's Advisor)

expected to be motivated and able to provide a good standard of care, having the ability to work with adolescents. They should also be willing to respect and promote a young person's family links, cultural and racial identity, and work appropriately with the professionals who are also involved with the young person's care.

So does The Praxis Hosting Scheme really work in practice? Certainly Bexley Council's Richard Turner thinks so. He says "We [Bexley Council] have been grateful for the service provided by the Praxis Hosting Scheme. It has been an innovative and helpful scheme that has made a

material difference to those they have helped." Despite having never met the Praxis Hosting Scheme team ("Everything is done by phone" notes Mr Turner), they are regarded as "good and competent colleagues who have a way of getting any problem promptly sorted or solved, this is a significant contributory fact to the scheme working as far as we are concerned.", according to Mr Turner. Bexley Council have been using the Praxis Hosting Scheme since Spring 1999, and have seen many who would have ended up in hotels on the south coast, find themselves happily placed with hosts.

Apart from the obvious social benefits to the scheme, there is also a huge financial saving involved. It is between 45-50% cheaper to have asylum seekers hosted as compared to having them accommodated in hotels and B&B's. Not only that, hosting families can also receive up to £140 per week in allowances which bear no impact on their social security or other state benefits. This seems like a Win! Win! Win! situation to me.

For further information call PRAXIS Hosting Scheme on (020) 749 7615 or visit www.praxis.org.uk

If you would like to submit an article about your church group/organisation, or you'd like us to include your flyers/information in one of our mailings, please contact George - details below.

The deadline for inclusion with the next issue of CANDL Light is Friday 15th August 2003

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