



Branching Out

www.themustardtree.com/branchingout.html

The Newsletter of the Mustard Tree Community Church, Longwell Green Autumn 2011

Changing the world one child at a time

“The slum smelled, and there was rubbish, flies and goats everywhere. It was not nice,” said Chloe. “And they lived in one room, had one curtain, and a sharp spring was poking out of the sofa,” said her brother.

Aaron and Chloe were in Kenya with their parents, Doug and Sally, and the Gazzard family to visit the children they sponsor through Compassion. Daniel lives in a slum, but Kasende lives in the countryside.

“Kasende’s dad was farming a small plot of land near to a river. We had once sent money for them to buy a goat, and there it was!” said Doug. “Her older sister gave me a piggy-back across the river because of the eels and leeches!” said Chloe.

Both sets of parents noticed how their children enjoyed playing with the Kenyan children – stepping over the language, cultural, and slum barriers and taking the huge differences in their stride.

But it was not all good. “A persistent man sold us lots of educational

things,” said Chloe. “Then children surrounded us, asking for these. When we gave it out, the children ran off, not even saying thank-you!” It was an example of how hard it is to really help people. The saying goes, ‘Give a man a fish, he’ll eat for a day. Teach him to fish, and he’ll eat forever.’

Contrasting this with work of Compassion was instructive. “A child is sponsored to receive an education, in a supportive and caring context” said Helen Gazzard. “As a result, they are given the chance to escape the poverty trap. Recently a sponsored

child has become an MP in Uganda. It gives them hope, and their families are helped too. When enough families are helped, entire villages can change.”

Aaron was confident nobody in his class in Longwell Green primary school was as poor, materially, as Kasende. But he also did not think they were happier. Jake was amazed at how well the children knew their times tables. The school had no windows, never mind interactive white boards, but the children had a passion for learning.

The visit had been rich with experiences. Toilets that were holes in the ground, chicken heads that bobbed in their soup, a wild monkey stealing their picnic. But the biggest impression was made by the children whom they sponsor. Now they know them as real people, actually as friends. It’s helping children, both there and here.



Celebrating 20 years of the



CoffeeTots

CoffeeTots has provided a regular haven for me where I can meet with other mums, many of whom quickly became friends, and have a couple of hours chatting, laughing and swapping stories of our week, whilst the kids play happily and safely. There's also the weekly craft activity, John Mark's excellent sing-alongs and the lovely "perfect for children" hall. And never underestimate the power of a cup of coffee and a slice of home-made cake to a sleep deprived, stressed out mum!

Its been a highlight of my week for the past three years!

Keep up the good work
Anne (2007-2010)

CoffeeTots is having a reunion at the
Community Fete. Can you come?
Sunday 4th September 12-3 pm

CoffeeTots Reunion



Saturday night

Snake handling, kayaking, dress parties, food.... All youth groups Xone (8-10)

But the most popular event in their calendar would be the X2 camp, a weekend at Briarlands. Football, crocker, wide games, punting, water and a bonfire, help to make the weekend exhilarating and exhausting!



Bunch of CLOWNS

The CLOWNS assembly team takes assemblies in nine local primary schools every term.

The team is made up of volunteers from five different churches. "Sometimes you catch their expressions when they realise we are taking the assembly. You hear a 'yes!', and that is always nice," said Janet (an ex-teacher from Siston Common).

"The message of faith, hope and love, which is central to the Christian faith, is what we try and convey through stories, dramas, and involving the children," said John Mark who leads the group.



Branching Out features local people sharing life experiences. It aims to help build a sense of community in Longwell Green, and to give examples of what the Christian faith might look like in everyday life.

What would improve it? We would love to hear from you: 07868 707 913



Mustard Tree Community Church



Eight youth groups

g, laser quest, dodge ball, fancy
make up the fortnightly fun for the
) and X2 (11+).

GOLDEN BLEND

Every Thursday, seniors enjoy a chat
and a coffee.

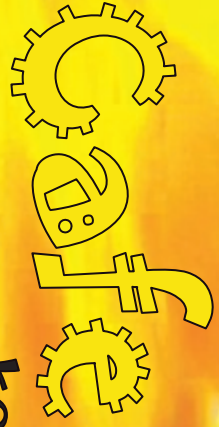
It is a chance to meet others, and catch up on
news. There's a monthly meal, and sometimes
presentations or live music.

It began nearly 20 years ago and runs all year
round. Quality of life is enhanced by socialising.



plants for sale

Refreshments
Games



face painting
bouncy castle

WNS?

Live music
barbecue

for everyone
Community
Fete

12-3 pm

Sunday 4th September

Longwell Green Community Centre

tug o' war

A time to live



My son, Ben, had been knocked off his bicycle & was in intensive care in Leeds. He was on life support, with severe head injury, a shattered jaw, 3 broken vertebrae, and I knew he might die.

I felt sick with fear. The train had taken 3 hours to get me this far & I was still 200 miles away. Would I be in time? How were my other 3 children coping? They are grown up, but you never stop being a mum. I had often faced difficult situations alone. My mind wandered back.



I remembered when I was in court as a young mum, afraid the judge would rule that my ex-husband could have our two year old daughter every weekend. I had opened my Bible in desperation. There was the verse about Gideon who was given the dream about a 'loaf of barley bread that tumbled into the enemy camp and struck the tent and overturned it.' My maiden name was Barley. Was God trying to tell me something?

Moments later the judge overturned his previous decision. Now my children could stay together.

I had seen amazing answers to prayer. But at this time, I couldn't pray so I texted everyone in my phone "Ben on life support in Leeds, please pray." By the time the train reached Leeds I felt a strange peace, and I knew that whether my son lived or died he would be ok.

He lived - and started on the difficult road to recovery.

But the challenges were not over. Within two months of his accident my

mum had died, my baby grandson had been very ill and I had moved house in a hurry. I ended up in hospital with an acute stress reaction that affected my heart.

My GP suggested I see somebody who might help me. She handed me a card with Denise's name on it. I had worked with Denise in Bridgwater 10 years previously, and now she lived just down the road. A Christian friend. The despair began to lift.

Now, two years on, Ben and his brother have completed a lake district cycling challenge, 112 miles through hilly terrain in the rain and hail, in 8hrs 33mins. They raised £3500 for the Yorkshire Air ambulance. The involvement of the Leeds helicopter and the anaesthetist on board with the paramedics had clearly saved Ben's life and we will always be grateful.

Coffeetots

Tuesday 9.30-11.30am

under 3s
parent & toddler
group

contact: Gina 932 5035



Golden Blend

Thursday 10.30-12

coffee and chat

contact: Stephanie 932 5876



footprints Pre-school Playgroup

Mon/Wed/Fri

9.15-1.15pm

Fun learning
environment for
3 & 4 year olds.

contact: 987 3395



Mustard Tree Community Church

where everyone is welcome

Sundays 10.30am

ending with coffee at 12
Longwell Green Community Centre

Want to know more?

John-Mark 07868 707913

Jan 07853 284485

Steve 07860 441776

or visit www.themusatrdtree.com

