

Annual Report 2009 - 2010

28 years
of
supporting
families
across
the
county



Home-Start Herefordshire

Registered Charity Number 1113432 Company Number 5659978

Chair's Report

HELEN TANK
Chair of Trustees

The past twelve months have seen considerable changes at Home-Start Herefordshire.

Our Scheme Manager, Jill Hiscox, retired in December 2009 after 27 years. Jill was involved with the Home-Start Herefordshire since it started in 1982, firstly as a volunteer, then as a Scheme Manager. She, therefore, carried a torch for the organisation from the very start and this gave her an authority which impressed all who met her. For Jill, the needs of families always came first. However, her door was always open to staff and volunteers alike – kindness and generosity were personal qualities that she brought to the job. She saw the organisation through difficult times with a determination that working together would achieve a successful outcome and an unshakeable belief in the core values of Home-Start.

Her departure was therefore in a real sense, the end of an era. However Mandie Preece has now taken over the reins and impresses us all with her enthusiasm, focus and vision for the future.



Helen Tank & David Williams

During the year we have also:-

- Launched our website, enabling us to reach a wider audience and raise our profile
- Delivered ongoing training to our experienced volunteers as well as running a number of preparation courses for new volunteers
- Proved that we offer a quality service to families following a successful inspection by Home-Start UK in October 2009 and the preparation for the re-accreditation by acquA in July 2010
- Enabled our staff to obtain the qualifications they need to train volunteers effectively and contribute to their own professional development
- Conducted a research project into the needs of Polish, Portuguese and Malayalam families for whom English is an additional language (EAL)
- Supported families experiencing problems as a result of the recession
- Bid successfully to Commissioners at Herefordshire Council for a contract to deliver a 'Befriending' Service to families in Herefordshire

Our plans for the coming year include:-

- Giving families a greater voice in the way we develop our service
- Offering new volunteers the opportunity to have the learning they do on the preparation course accredited by the Open College Network
- Developing the Trustee Board so that, in conjunction with the Scheme Manager, we review, evaluate and improve the service we offer in the light of feedback from our families, volunteers, staff and fellow professionals
- Recruiting a more diverse workforce
- Implementing an effective Marketing Strategy
- Exploring all funding opportunities

We are acutely aware that these are challenging times for all charities, with dramatic cuts to public expenditure on the horizon. We are extremely grateful, therefore, to our funders for the support they give and trust they take satisfaction in knowing that their contribution helps to give children a better start in life and parents much needed support.

We also extend our thanks to our staff and volunteers who continue to work with such dedication and good will.

Recession Project

DIANE GIBSON
Organiser/Project Leader

In the Autumn of 2009 Home-Start Herefordshire was successful in obtaining 6 month funding from Home-Start UK to work with families who were experiencing problems as a result of the recession.

The project was to help new families who were referred specifically because of problems relating from the recession or existing Home-Start Herefordshire families who were now experiencing difficulties as a result of the recession. The problems ranged from redundancy, spiralling debts, to illness brought on as a result of their difficulties.

Home-Start Herefordshire reached its target of eight families, which came from a variety of backgrounds, by January 2010. Seven families were supported by a volunteer and one of these was also supported by a Home-Start group and the remaining family only attended a Home-Start group. Of the eight families, seven have remained with Home-Start Herefordshire after the end of the project.

It was clearly demonstrated that where trust had been developed between the parent and the volunteer, the parent was more likely to discuss issues they did not easily share and which were often very sensitive and emotive for them. Where this was the case, the volunteer was able to sign-post to the various appropriate agencies and in some cases to accompany them to appointments, to entertain the children whilst they talked and also to support them with the outcome.

Scheme Manager's Report

MANDIE PREECE
Scheme Manager

It is with slight trepidation yet pride that I have compiled this "report" since replacing Jill Hiscox on her retirement in December after years of dedicated work supporting Home-Start Herefordshire. "Enjoy the new life Jill!"

Another year has passed at such a speed it's been a year of change, mountains of paperwork, challenges and so many successes it is impossible to mention them all.

We have seen paperwork and assessments increase to an all time high. We undertook HSUK Quality Assurance assessment in the autumn of 2009, local authority commissioning and preparation for acquA re-accreditation in the spring of 2010.

Our QA assessment and the subsequent report findings was certainly one of our high points this year. We were delighted in meeting all 16 QA Standards with excellent practice identified in many of these areas. As always and most importantly the assessment of our work with families and volunteers was praised. It was therefore an immense pleasure to receive the positive feedback from families themselves and their captured dialogue was proof indeed that our service really does make a difference....

Family quotes from QA report October 2009

"My volunteer has been fantastic....the service is brilliant...fantastic experience...It totally meets my needs...I have felt totally supported...very approachable staff...I've made friends within Home-Start...(The support had made)...a world of difference...given me and my kids confidence...given me back up practically and emotionally...has built my and my children's confidence in men...(Before Home-Start support)...I previously wouldn't have left the house...(The support has meant)...someone on my side at all times - it's been essential to my well being"

Again when volunteers were interviewed about their experience with Home-Start and the support they received. yet again we were delighted with the QA's findings...

Volunteer quotes from QA report "...Support is always there...I feel safe volunteering for Home-Start...I am able to talk through my concerns about supporting the family...gives me, as a volunteer, a very good support network...the organisers have always got time to listen...there's good two-way communication between organisers and volunteers...organisers are very good at listening to what's needed and are able to change things"

Referrers quotes from QA report

"Very high standard of professionalism...Feedback from families is always positive and complimentary...Fantastic service to the community...The volunteers are trained to a high standard...very good feedback from the scheme regarding the development of the volunteer family support...The organisation has fantastic staff...Wish they could have more volunteers to support more families"

Volunteering is at the heart of our organisation and I am as amazed today as I was when I started with Home-Start over 5 years ago, at the kindness, dedication and commitment our volunteers give to the organisation and most importantly the families they visit.



Mandie Preece & Diane Gibson

January this year saw another time when I was to see yet again the true commitment of our volunteers. We were seeing the most adverse weather conditions the likes of which we hadn't seen for years. Parts of the county were cut off for weeks and families were desperate for support and provisions. Amazingly our volunteer team continued to visit, at a time when many other organisations had to almost shut down due to their depleted workforce, but not us! In the true spirit of volunteering, if it was safe and possible to do so our volunteers continued to visit, providing families with practical help like taking provision, as well as that continued consistent, ongoing emotional support at a time when it was most needed.

As well as a fantastic volunteer team. I would like to congratulate the staff team in their commitment to the organisation in a year where they have been constantly challenged with ongoing assessments, ever increasing targets, tight deadlines, at times it seemed like there was an introduction of new paperwork on a daily basis. This could have seen the strongest team flounder, but not this one, everything has been accepted in a professional manner with the knowledge that if these changes will benefit the organisation and maximise the quality of support we offer our families then that is reason enough.

I offer grateful thanks for the support and hard work of our Organisers Barbara, Diane & Tamra; our Marketing & Volunteer Recruitment Co-ordinator, Alison; our efficient Scheme Administrator, Sally; and our Play leaders Kim, Sandy, Kay and Claire.

I would like to thank the Trustees for believing in me. Their combined expertise and knowledge ensures Home-Start Herefordshire's continuing successful future.

Alison Jones

Marketing and volunteer recruitment Coordinator

Where has the time gone!

I have been with Home-Start for 18 months, initially as maternity cover for Jo Grafton. Since March this year I have taken on the position as Marketing and Volunteer Recruitment Coordinator as a permanent role. (And I love it!). As a relative new comer I have been made to feel very welcome and have had the full support from all the team here at Home-Start.

Here at the office we all help and assist each other but with my role it focuses on promoting our charity and increasing our volunteer workforce.

My aim is to make the county aware of the services Home-Start can provide for families, and also to encourage potential volunteers to step forward and offer their time and effort to help those in need of support.

I am always looking for new opportunities to help promote Home-Start, be it an event, poster campaign, photo opportunity, press release or the support from a local Herefordshire business.

I feel a great sense of achievement whenever a potential volunteer has contacted us after one of my promotions . It makes me feel that my efforts are worthwhile.

With the help of my colleagues I plan to keep promoting the good work of Home-Start throughout Herefordshire, in the hope that it will continue to bring forward new volunteers.



Princess Anne's visit to the Toy Library

Ethnicity Project

DIANE GIBSON

Organiser/Project Leader

Home-Start Herefordshire were requested by Herefordshire County Council to undertake a research project into the needs of county residents for whom English is an additional language (EAL).

As a result of the research, Home-Start Herefordshire has changed its advertising. All of our posters now encourage people who may be English Additional Language speakers to become volunteers. In addition to this, there are now specific posters aimed at recruiting Polish, Portuguese and Russian volunteers displayed around the county.

The Ross Toy Library stay and play session has attracted a number of Eastern European families who attend on a regular basis. The staff always ensure that all visitors, whatever their background, are encouraged to take part in the available activities.

The project's impact has been to enhance Home-Start Herefordshire's awareness of the different ethnic backgrounds of people in the county and the need to be alert and respond to their particular needs in an empathic manner.

A Family Story

Julie Simpson

My name is Julie Simpson. I am a 37 yr old single mother of 6. Tom – 11, Georgie – 10, Jennie – 7, Ben – 6, Chris – 4 and Lizzie – 1.

Up until 2 years ago I was a mental health nurse, I trained and worked in Herefordshire until 2000, when I returned to Sandwell to be closer to family members. We then relocated to Herefordshire in 2008.

I was first introduced to Home-Start in April 2009. I had moved to Ledbury after a marital breakdown and was seeking to leave all things painful behind me. My Mother had died after a long and harrowing terminal illness and I had in my grief, become pregnant with my sixth child. My partner of 15 years suddenly had no interest in me or our children and pressured me to have an abortion. The idea of terminating a life so soon after I had watched the most precious life ebb away, was completely alien to me, hence 'running away from home'.

When the health visitor referred me, I was about to deliver Elizabeth and was living in very compact accommodation, only just having passed my driving test, with very little support. I remember being very enthusiastic about the idea, as I was conscious that my children, who had been very close to both their Grandmothers, now had no other maternal figure to identify with. I really had no idea the impact Home-Start would have on me personally.

Diane came to our home first and we talked about our families in general, which allowed Diane to find out more about us. She immediately thought of volunteer Virginia Jolly, a long standing volunteer, who seemed to 'tick' all the boxes as far as our need for support went. Virginia had, been a widowed mother with 2 children and she had many contacts and lots of local knowledge, was easy going and had a good sense of humour.

Virginia came to meet us all in the Easter holidays. I had specified that the volunteer must meet ALL the children and be prepared to engage with the whole family. Virginia never flinched and won the children over immediately by making a game of learning all their names, which is no easy feat..., I struggle on a bad day! She drew a picture with Georgie, dismantled her hearing aids with Jennie, helped Ben build some Lego, admired Christian's new DVD and stoically shook hands with Tom. All whilst holding an adult conversation! Virginia was just right for us. We had found our volunteer.

This was in April 2009 and Virginia slowly but surely has become part of our lives. She is a point of reference for anything needed and generally knows who can help or where to start looking.

Uttering the magic words 'Mrs Jolly sent me' makes people fall over themselves to help. I believe that she leaves a trail of delighted people wherever she goes and like Tinkerbell spreads fairy dust.

It is very hard to remain down, Virginia has buoyed me up countless times as well as giving emotional support, she is very practical and helps in ways that are too many to list. She was active in our house hunt for larger accommodation, helping pack and visiting with help the day after the move.

She has helped with dentists, hospital appointments, and G.P appointments. She has held Lizzie when she has been sick with her many chest problems, she has calmly dealt with Christian



Julie Simpson & her family

when he has had tantrums galore, earning the well earned endearment 'the ninja' when he could not pronounce her name!

Every week she is there supporting us, encouraging us, listening to us. Her husband Martin is constantly asked to fix things for us. The best way forward within unknown territory like lawn mowers or new tyres! Martin has also been of particular help to Tom, who at 11 was floundering for a male role model he could respect and be on an equal footing with. In Martin he has found a mentor who will help when the inevitable tough times strike in growing up. This aspect is an unexpected bonus of my friendship with Virginia, another box 'ticked' in our needs.

That is the true joy of Home-Start, the support evolves as my family grows and faces new challenges. The service is technically for families with young children, yet my older children gain as much as their younger siblings.

I hope that Virginia receives as much back from us as she gives, the children certainly think the world of her. When we are offered the opportunity to attend Home-Start days out or get together or the opening of our Home-Start allotment, their first question is whether 'the ninja' will be attending too.

Home-Start has given us tremendous support and has helped me cope with a journey that at times has been very difficult and full of heartache. Other times it has been overflowing with joy and hope. Having someone to share it with has been insightful and rewarding, because as well as a parent, I had lost my sounding board in my Mum and sometimes it has been incredibly difficult to put things in perspective and move forward. I have slowly come to realise that I am not on my own. An example of this is an operation I am scheduled to have later this year. Home-Start has already offered their services when I am post operative, to help with practicalities when I am unable to lift or drive.

The Home-Start programme is infinitely valuable. It fills a gap and a need that the service user is not always aware of. It offers encouragement and support when people can be at their most vulnerable and unable to focus on helping themselves or their families. The help can be subtle or practical. I remember when the children were too confined in our smaller house, they needed space in which to be children and I needed a small but precious respite to allow me to carry on with all the day to day trials and tribulations of raising a large family alone. Virginia sensed this and we were given free rein of Virginias' garden, to let off steam whilst Virginia, her husband Martin and I sat watching (dithering) in the winter chill with steaming mugs of tea and plates of biscuits. In the summer it was jugs of squash and ice lollies but the message was the same, we are here – let us help. Well they did. And they do.

A Year in Pictures



Easter 2009



Volunteer First Aid Course



Shortwood Farm



AGM at Town Hall July 2009



AGM at Town Hall July 2009



Easter fun at Dinedor 2009



Play Planet May 2009



Play Planet May 2009



Play Planet May 2009



Play Planet May 2009



Birtsmorton Aug 2009



Bartestree Aug 2009



Birtsmorton Aug 2009



Bartestree Aug 2009



Birtsmorton Aug 2009



End of Septembers Preparation course



Bartestree Aug 2009



Birtsmorton Aug 2009



Jill's retirement celebrations



Christmas Party 2009



Music Workshop 2010



Fashion Show March 2010



Music Workshop 2010



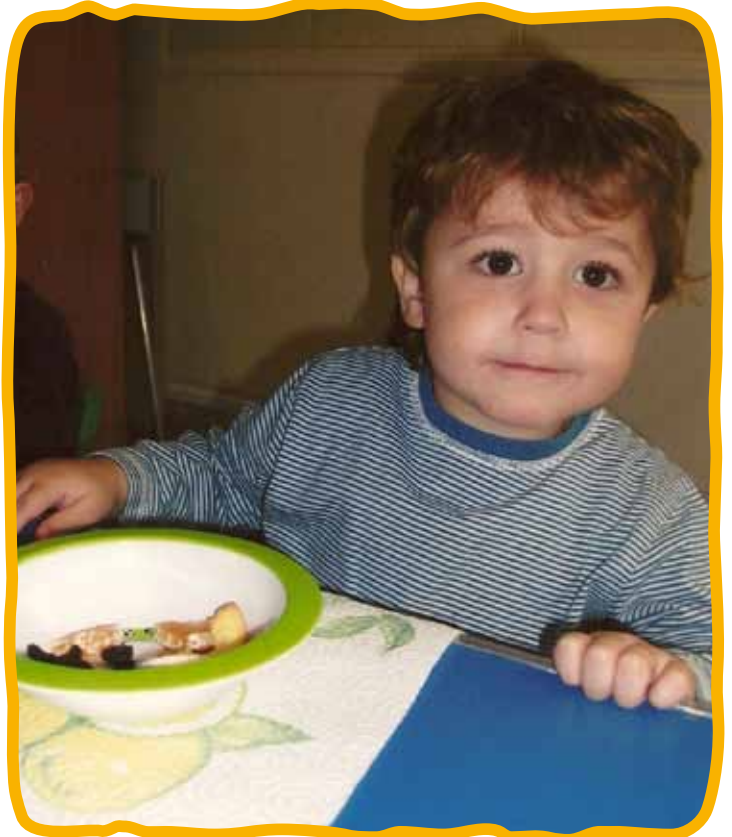
Sally strutting her stuff March 2010



Music Workshop 2010



Diane and Sally March 2010



Group Report

TAMRA THOMAS
Group Co-ordinator

Where has the year gone!! We seem to have been so busy at the Groups the time has slipped by. We have had a lot of fun seeing in each Season – the families have enjoyed many craft sessions taking part in all sorts of activities from making elephants to cake decorating.

We have enjoyed visits from Bookstart providing us with wonderful story and rhyme mornings and leaving us with wonderful books for the children, also Surestart with their baby sensory sessions which inspired us to make many of our own toys and the Speech and language team with sound/speech games. We have held healthy eating sessions making our own meals and enjoying sharing what we have made. We have also had several excuses to have cake and coffee and enjoyed every minute of it! In fact we have worked so hard we had to have a visit from the Blind College who provided a fantastic pamper and relaxation session.

The Groups have also been out and about enjoying visits to the Madley Environmental Centre, walks to Kington Woods, Strawberry picking (from the colour of the children's lips I think they enjoyed their strawberry picking very much!!), the local Library and not to forget the favourite one of all the walk to the

local building site with the children to see the diggers which the parents also love because they can have a few minutes chatting on their own.

Fun, friendship and support enjoyed by all.



Tamra Thomas & Kay Gray

The Toy Library

SANDY PRYDE
Group Co-ordinator

The Toy Library is a success story.

The Ryefield Centre is an idyllic venue for our young families. Spacious rooms and a safe, secure, outside play area facilitates all.

On a regular basis we welcome not just Mums but Dads, Grandparents and childminders. We also have seen a steady increase in our European families (seven different nationalities now attend). This diversity of adult carers and cultures has been instrumental in creating an atmosphere of happy, busy youngsters having fun.

The new mothers and babies have a soft play area where they can relax. Mums can chat about anxieties and successes away from our busy play activity areas.

A healthy break of diced fruit, crackers and drink is almost a party event. All but the babies sit at a table in a long line with their carers behind them encouraging their offspring.

Throughout the year special events have been organised e.g. Bookstart Visit, Musical Fun with Jenny Goddard and A Teddy Bears Picnic. The children have made cards and gifts for special occasions, grown cress, made simple puppets and even made bird feeders in Winter.

The morning always ends with a very popular singing, action rhyme time. Our European parents particularly enjoy this activity and we have given English words for favourite rhymes to Mums.

A variety of toy activities offer all the special 'outcomes' in learning development.



Sandy Pryde

Barbara's Story

BARBARA STEVENS

Organiser

I am an organiser with Home-Start Herefordshire, I have been in the post for some time and am still amazed at how varied a day; a week; a year can be and all so very different.

I love to meet new people and listen to their stories. In the main, my role as an organiser is very similar to what it was when I first came in to post in 1990. I meet new families, I learn about their experiences and the stresses and strains of their family life.

Meeting potential volunteers, who want to give their time and experience to help others is a gift which has always been an important one, life for many people is so hectic these days and the gift of giving time is even more precious.

With the scheme manager and other organisers I train the potential volunteers on their preparation courses, watching them acquire the knowledge they need to help families that are referred to Home-Start in Herefordshire. We carefully match the volunteers to families and offer support to both through regular contact support meetings and reviews.

I help to arrange family outings and events, this year we had several trips during the long summer holidays including a very rainy day in Burnham-on-Sea, where families made the most of it braving the beach.

The weather for the trip to Telford Town Park was kinder, and children, mums and dads took advantage of the exciting choices of well spaced play areas, Wonderland or a brief visit to the town centre looking for bargains etc.

Our own training and personal development is important to the scheme and this year I have attended a number of sessions looking at different aspects of Safeguarding. We also find it very useful meeting up with other organisers at Home-Start regional meetings. We catch up with friends, make new ones and find out about other Home-Start schemes throughout the country.

Overall this has been another very busy exciting year for myself and my colleagues.



Barbara Stevens

Sally Jones

Administrator & volunteer

I joined Home-Start in 2006 and before long Home-Start was under my skin.

I love my job, the work is so varied and I am part of a very special team. I help on family outings and workshops and also the yearly Christmas Party. It is such a joy to see the families enjoy themselves. I also help with fundraising events and this year I was a model in a Fashion Show. I was very nervous, but it was great fun.

I am often the first point of call for families who want to self refer, or professionals wanting to make a referral. I hear of families' problems and how they are struggling and often felt that I just wanted to go and help. I came to the decision that I wanted to become a home-visiting volunteer. I had already attended the Preparation Course when I started with Home-Start, but I knew I had to wait until the right time to be able to make that commitment.

That time came for me last October. I realised how the volunteer felt on that first visit, I was nervous and wondering if the family would like me. But I am still visiting that family, the relationship has grown and she trusts me. I really enjoy my visits, spending time with mum and playing with the children, it is so rewarding. Mum said to me one day 'I really look forward to your visits and seeing your smiling face'.

I hope to volunteer for many years to come.



Sally Jones

Treasurer's Report

ROB ELLAM
Treasurer

Income increased marginally during the year reflecting higher fund raising income and higher net investment income.

Amounts were received from Henry Smith Charity, Eveson Trust, Herefordshire Council, Four Acre Trust, PCT Small Funds Children in Need, EYES and Home-Start UK. We are grateful for their support. In addition money was received in the form of donations from individuals and the proceeds from fund raising events. We are grateful to the donors for their generosity and to all those involved in fund raising events for their hard work and commitment.

Expenditure was broadly unchanged with additional fund raising costs being offset by savings in other areas.

Our current unrestricted reserves only provide minimum cover for emergencies such as shortfalls in funding or unexpected expenditure. The Trustees continue to believe that reserves equivalent to 6 months expenditure, circa £80,000, are the optimum required to ensure continuity of operations and will continue to work towards this goal. Unrestricted at the end of the year were increased to £45,200 by the surplus for the year of £6,475.

How families consider their needs have been met

How Home-Start helped 45 families for whom support ended this year

Needs Expressed	Number of families expressing this need	Home-Start made a difference	There is no difference
I feel lonely and isolated	27	26	1
I don't know where to go for help and other services I need	10	9	
I often feel low or unhappy	22	22	
I have lost my confidence and don't feel good about myself	16	15	1
My own health causes me problems	13	13	
My child(ren)'s health causes me concern	11	11	
I worry that my child(ren) is/are unhappy	10	10	
I find it hard to cope with my child's behaviour	12	12	
I am not sure what I can do to help my child(ren) progress	12	12	
The difficult relationships in my family are hard to cope with	10	10	
I find it hard to manage everyday chores	8	7	1
I worry about money and making it go round	6	6	
Coping with several children under 5 is really hard work	17	17	

Home-Start Herefordshire, Suite 1, Unit 1A, Thorpe Business Park, Rotherwas, Hereford, HR2 6JT

Telephone: 01432 371212 email: homestart.hereford@virgin.net web: www.home-startherefordshire.co.uk

Home-Start Herefordshire is grateful to allpay for sponsoring this annual report and publishing it through their print & design services.

Financial Summary

	Year ending 31 March 2010	Year ending 31 March 2009
Incoming resources		
Donations	12,225	13,863
Fund raising income	7,337	3,630
Grants	156,028	155,435
Other income	1,977	1,069
	177,567	173,997
Resources expended		
Staff and volunteer costs	129,343	130,211
Fund raising costs	3,096	991
Office costs	14,901	14,104
Scheme expenses	19,314	20,800
Governance costs	1,162	1,460
	167,816	167,566
Net movement in funds		
Unrestricted funds	6,475	5,805
Restricted funds	3,276	626
Funds at 31 March		
Unrestricted	45,200	38,725
Restricted	8,307	5,031

Number of children in families supported

Under five years	186
Five years and over	106
Total	292



Herefordshire



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