



Support and friendship
for families

Annual Report 2011-12



celebrating
30 years

Home-Start Herefordshire

Registered Charity Number 1113432 Company Number 5659978

2011/2012's New Volunteers...



My Journey with Home-Start Herefordshire

RACHEL WARING
Volunteer

I first heard about Home-Start in 2010 from my Health Visitor in Kington, Avril Hill. I hate to admit it now, but at that time I had never heard of Home-Start and was certainly not aware of the amazing work they do, not only in our county of Herefordshire but also in the rest of the country. I had been discussing with Avril my ambition of becoming a midwife, and asked if she was aware of any work experience opportunities in the area that would help me to gain some knowledge of working within a caring environment. I had recently enrolled on an Access to Higher Education course at college and had been informed by the careers advisor and course tutor that I would not only need to pass the access course before I could apply to university, but in order to strengthen my application I would also need to undertake as much relevant work experience as possible. At this point becoming a Home-Start volunteer was really a 'means to an end' for me and this is something else that I am reluctant to admit, but these feelings soon changed as I started my journey with Home-Start.

I made contact with Barbara Stevens to enquire about becoming a Home-Start volunteer and arranged to meet her at my home. We talked about myself and my own family and the reasons why I wanted to volunteer, also the training course and what was involved. Barbara was happy for me to attend the 10 week training course which started in September 2011.

The other trainee volunteers I met on the course were all very different people from a variety of backgrounds and each of them had their own reasons for wanting to become a volunteer. They were a lovely group of people. The 10 weeks went by very quickly, I thoroughly enjoyed each session and every week learnt something new and interesting. Each of the weekly sessions were very well planned and organised and several different members of Home-Start staff were involved at different times throughout the course. It was lovely to hear how committed and passionate they all were about Home-Start and to listen to their stories and experiences of the different types of help and support they had been able to give to families with young children in Herefordshire. We were also given the opportunity to meet with other trained/experienced volunteers who had been working with families which I personally found very useful. They were able to discuss with the group in some detail (but without breaching confidentiality), their own experiences of volunteering for Home-Start. I also enjoyed the fact that each session was made enjoyable for everyone at the same time as addressing important and sometimes very serious issues such as our health and safety as a volunteer, confidentiality issues and child protection.

The matching with my first family took place at the beginning of this year. Barbara told me about the family she had in mind for me to work with, and was also able to give me details of their situation and the type of help and support they were looking for. I was given the opportunity to comment on how I felt about the family.

I arranged a mutually convenient time with Barbara for my first meeting with the family. I felt nervous and excited about it, but Barbara was with me and helped to break the ice for the first half an hour before leaving me to chat with the family and arrange a time for my first proper visit, and to be honest the rest is history! I have been totally and utterly overwhelmed, humbled and privileged by the family, they give me so much joy and fulfilment. I really look forward to my weekly visits and I think they do too, which is more than I could have wished for! I sometimes feel like they are more of a help and support to me than I am to them!! Due to the family's circumstances I am able to provide them with a lot of practical support during my visits. I am also there to give some emotional support as well as our relationship has developed into friendship.

The whole process of becoming a volunteer for Home-Start has really left me quite speechless. I feel so privileged to be in a position to give some help and support to people that need it and without becoming a volunteer I would probably have never met my family and the thought of that makes me feel really quite sad. At the beginning of this whole process I felt like it was a 'means to an end' but now I know that it has been far more than that for me and without it there would be a gap in my life.

This year we have supported 20 lone parent families

Chair's Report

HELEN TANK

Chair of trustees

This has been a challenging year for the Charity. We lost over half of our income for the coming year, and the future of Home-Start in Herefordshire was uncertain. However, we have been overwhelmed by the support we received from families, volunteers, members of the public and our funders during this difficult time and are delighted to say that we have been able to secure additional funds. We have also cut our expenditures to the bone, including reductions in staff hours. This results in a broadly balanced position for the coming year and we hope this will allow Home-Start to emerge as a stronger and more resilient organisation.

The achievements and other significant events during the year were as follows:

- Trained our volunteers to deliver 'Maximising Income' project. This enables families to access benefits and grants to which they are entitled, through the Turn2us website. As a result, one family with a disabled child received help with winter fuel bills and another was able to claim a council tax rebate. The project also helps families make financial plans for the future.
- Completed a research project on 'What difference the support of Home-Start has made to families'. We asked families who had received Home-Start support in the past to assess the impact of that support on (a) maternal well being, (b) social networks and (c) parenting behaviours. The results were encouraging with 86% of respondents saying that the positive progress they had made was a direct result of Home-Start support.
- Started to use a new Home-Start UK MESH web-based database. This enables us to plot an individual family's progress and produce statistical reports relating to that family; data we can use to improve our service overall.



*Sally Jones, Administrator with Helen Tank,
Chair and RH Simon Hughes MP*

Helen Tank	Chair
Vicki Murray	Vice Chair
Rob Ellam	Treasurer
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Elizabeth Hunter	Trustee - Retired 2012
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Russell B Hamilton	Trustee
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Julie Wells	Volunteer Representative
Judy Hooley	Volunteer Representative
Patron:	Mrs Alexandra James
Vice President:	Mrs Anne Oldroyd
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- Delivered accredited training to 14 volunteers.
- Negotiated a 2 year contract with Herefordshire Council to deliver short-term interventions to families with defined outcomes as agreed at Multi-Agency Group meetings. For example, helping a school-aged child in establishing a routine for homework.
- Held Family Forums which enabled families to provide feedback on Children's Centre services, to respond to local authority consultation, and to contribute to the future planning for Home-Start.
- Trained 1 member of staff to support social work students on placement with Home-Start. As a result, our first MA student social worker has undergone a 9 day induction and is now on placement with Home-Start, working as a volunteer, helping with the weekly Toy library in Ross and planning a new session for the volunteer preparation course on 'Changing Behaviours' which she will deliver as part of her training. Our member of staff is training to become a Practice Educator at Birmingham University.
- Carried out a pilot project with 5 families with children aged 5-16 in response to increased demand for this service. This project showed the benefit of our intervention for such families and we are now taking on more families with children aged 5-16.
- Continued to raise the profile of Home-Start. We were delighted to welcome the Right Honourable Simon Hughes MP as our guest speaker at our AGM in September 2011. We also now have a presence on Facebook, where we are able to promote our events, seek donations and publicise our activities. We have mobilised the huge support for Home-Start in the community to positive effect over the last 6 months

Plans for the future

Our major plans for the future are as follows:

- Work with over 5s. This will include-
- Working directly with children to help them access services, extend social networks, tackle issues at school and encourage positive relationships with parents and carers.
- Encourage children to get involved in community activities and contribute to local planning and consultation, for example, school councils and shadow boards.
- Support children to make healthy choices and manage risk so they are better able to make informed decisions about their futures.
- Complete a research project getting children's feedback and views on Home-Start
- Run Adult Learning sessions for parents at the Hereford group
- Deliver and evaluate the Herefordshire Council contract
- Offer placements to more social work students
- Prepare for Home-Start UK review of our service across 12 areas of Quality Assurance in 2013
- Increase the geographical scope of Family Forums
- Review future funding for group work in Herefordshire
- Fundraise to ensure ongoing financial viability.

Hereford Family Group

TAMRA THOMAS
Group Co-ordinator

The new year saw a new venue for our Hereford Group. We moved to the Widemarsh Childrens Centre where we were warmly welcomed.

This gave us the opportunity to use all their wonderful facilities and we took full advantage! We used the garden play area whenever possible - even in the rain we were able to put on our wellies and waterproofs to paddle and play, we joined the wiggle and giggle group to sing, dance and climb on the equipment, our cooking sessions were fun and delicious and our craft making sessions always seemed to work out well with a little help!.

The Forest school gave our families the chance to explore the woods and gardens looking at bugs and worms (not always popular with some of the mums) birds, plants, etc. etc. We made nests and mud models then finished the course with a camp fire and toasted marshmallows washed down with a lovely mug of hot chocolate.

This of course was all very hard work so we had to reward ourselves with various trips to the park, strawberry picking and ending the year with an outing to Rowlestone Court Farm to taste their delicious home made ice cream!!



Student Reports

BETH RILEY & CHARLOTTE JAMES

My name is Charlotte James and I am studying a Counselling Society and Youth Justice BA Hons at Newport University. As part of my course I have to do a 120 hour placement. After speaking to one of my mother's friends (a social worker), who has worked with Home-Start, explained what Home-Start was and also how it was relevant to my course, i.e being able to listen and form helping relationships with families, I decided to approach the Herefordshire branch.

They were more than happy to give me the opportunity to do my placement with them. They provided me with a mentor, Diane Gibson, who has helped me to complete a portfolio, showing my experiences as a volunteer and understanding of the work. This has allowed me to reflect on theory, skills and practice, and is also going to be useful to show future employers the skills that I have learnt.

During my placement I have been visiting a family for nearly 8 months, and have enjoyed the opportunity to build a relationship with them and watch how the journey develops and improves their situation. This is the traditional way that Home-Start helps and supports families throughout the county.

At the same time I am also working with new short term targeted families, for a 12 week period. This has been an interesting experience as the main aim is not really to develop the relationship between volunteer and family, but rather to work on achieving a set outcome to a specific problem/situation. This does not mean that there is no relationship between the volunteer and the family, as this is still very important and needed in order to work together. However there is a much more formal approach to the way the volunteer interacts with the families. More supervision and contact between the volunteer and the Home-Start organisers takes place to ensure the 12 week journey is going in the right direction.

The whole experience has been a real insight, being able to compare and contrast the two methods of helping and supporting families in their own homes.

Whilst doing my placement at Home-Start Herefordshire it has made me re-think the type of career I will choose when I have graduated. Originally I thought I would work as a counsellor within schools, (this is an idea that has been piloted in schools around Wales and has been fairly successful). Since my involvement with Home-Start I would now like to do something of a similar nature that works with the whole family. I would like to thank Home-Start for giving me that chance.

My name is Beth Riley, I am a first year student on a social work MA course at Worcester University. I started my placement with Home-Start Herefordshire in May this year. Due to the way the course is run I did not have a say over where my placement would be, as they like to give a range of experiences. I have to admit I was a little worried when I was told where the placement would be. This is due to the fact that I do not really feel comfortable working with very young children. However I would like to say that over the time I have been working with Home-Start I have actually enjoyed the work that is directly with children and feeling more confident in that area.

I have been very well supported by the whole office, I felt at home there within the first week or so.

I have been working mainly on the new contract alongside Diane, where I have been working as a volunteer within some families and the Organiser in others. This has given me a wider knowledge of the families that Home-Start Herefordshire works with, also how the scheme can actually help those families. Working directly with the families is only a small proportion of the opportunities I have been given during my placement, yet they have been the most informative.

I am half-way through my 100 day placement as I write this, however it has been a very dramatic learning curve for me and I have enjoyed every minute of it. I would like to thank the staff and volunteers for all the support they have given me, allowing me to have this opportunity to work with them whilst continuing to learn.

Most of all thank you to the families who have allowed a student to come in and have agreed to give feedback on my performance.



Scheme Manager's Report

MANDIE PREECE
Scheme Manager

Well what a year we've had! We have experienced a rollercoaster ride of highs and lows!

We started off our 30th Anniversary year with mixed emotions. Firstly we were extremely proud that we had reached this incredible milestone and we were looking at a year in which we had recruited and trained the most volunteers we had ever done before, but we were also to face one of the most challenging periods in our 30 year history.

During this year we have taken our programme of volunteer recruitment and training to a new level. As well as offering potential volunteers our 10 week accredited training we also have made other accredited training courses available including Maximising Income and Depression training, thus providing volunteers with an opportunity to continue their own personal development whilst also volunteering for Home-Start Herefordshire.

Also in this year we successfully secured a grant from the Santander Foundation which enabled us to launch a new Maximising Income Service for families experiencing financial hardship. We were seeing a huge increase in families who were really struggling with debt related problems especially as there had been major changes within the welfare system. The new service has been vital in supporting families to navigate the system and helping them to access additional financial support that is available to them.

Another highlight in our year had to be last year's AGM. We were extremely fortunate to welcome the Right Honourable Simon Hughes MP as our guest speaker, who

spoke passionately how Home-Start Herefordshire "was a valued and confidence boosting service to many families with young children and considered as a lifeline" He also endorsed volunteering as being "good for the mind and soul and helps people to gain valuable work experience".

However alongside these fabulous achievements we were also facing extremely challenging times in relation to our funding situation. Due to the ever increasing restriction on Local Authority budgets we too were faced with the possibility of our funding being cut drastically or even losing it totally. We submitted a family support bid in response to the new commissioning arrangements by Herefordshire Council. In May this year we were delighted to secure a 2 year contract with the Council, but we were faced with the challenge of delivering a targeted programme of family support for children 0-19yrs for half the funding we had received in previous years. This had a huge impact on our service delivery resulting in staff taking a cut in hours and service delivery being reduced.

Throughout this extremely difficult period we have been amazed by the support from volunteers, families and members of the public alike, who have campaigned tirelessly endorsing how important Home-Start Herefordshire's Early Intervention Services are to families living in the county.

We are delighted to say that with the support of the community & loyal funders like the Four Acre Trust, Eveson, Bulmer's, Community Foundation and generous donors we are now in a position to continue to offer our Volunteer Befriending Services to the most vulnerable families in Herefordshire.

We know there are still challenging times ahead but we feel with the support & commitment from our incredible volunteers (Home-Visiting & Trustees), families, supporters and our fantastic staff team, Home-Start Herefordshire has a very successful & secure future ahead- "Roll on the next 30 Years!"

A Family Story

Mandy Jones



This year we have supported 329 children in families, including 225 under 5's

I have had help from Home-Start for many years and they have changed my life in so many ways.

I moved to Hereford not knowing anyone and feeling very isolated; I then fell pregnant and felt so alone, but then a neighbour told me about Home-Start. I started going to the Home-Start group and met so many lovely people, made loads of friends, which are now lifelong best friends. I also have a volunteer who is amazing. Her help and support has changed my life for the better.

When I found out that Home-Start had lost its funding from the Local Authority and might have to close, I was devastated.

I can't begin to tell you what this organisation has done for me and my children. I don't even know where to start. I just know I wouldn't be the person I am today if I hadn't had them in my life. I really could write a book.

I now have four children and my fourth child has downs syndrome; I would love Home-Start to be a part of his life like they have been for my three girls.

A Year in Pictures











Alex James with the Staff from Broadfield Court with 1st Prize in the raffle, a barrow of booze



Barbara Stevens, and Rae Jones in the Dean's garden



Derek Jacobi serving the Jubilee Tea at Broadfield Court

Events and fundraising during 2011-2012



Doreen Crompton a Home-Start Volunteer with Alison Jones on the Home-Start Tombola stall

Broadfield Court was the location for what has become our Annual Luncheon. We were once again treated to a wonderful event, beautiful food was served and music was played to entertain us. A fantastic barrow of booze which was made up of donations from all the staff and trustees was raffled and suitably won by the staff at Broadfield Court. The money raised this day was £979.

Home-Start Herefordshire were lucky enough to get our application in early to be the charity at the 2011 Food Festival held at the Racecourse... there were lots of tasty delights to eat, as well as one tasty delightful chef to meet. We were able to recruit a few new volunteers and raised £354 during this weekend.



Charity Collection at Hereford United Football Ground

December brought with it a fantastic turn out at the Hereford Cathedrals Shoppers Christmas carol service and Fair. We not only collected £202 we collected a couple of new volunteers

We kicked off 2012 with a big win at Hereford United Football ground, staff, Trustees and volunteers braved the cold and were met with very generous support from the home and away fans. In fact our collecting that day was the most money ever raised by a charity at the ground. We raised £500.

The Dean of Hereford Michael Tavinor kindly opened his beautiful gardens to the public to hold a coffee morning. Beautiful tasty cake donations were given from the staff, trustees, volunteers and friend of Home-Start Herefordshire. The visitors gave very generous donations. We raised £289.



Cathedral Christmas Shoppers Service and Fair

The month of June brought with it Diamond Jubilee Celebrations. The only sunny day of the weekend fell on the Jubilee tea party held by Alexandra James (President) at her home and business Broadfield Court another fundraising event with a beautiful backdrop.. The money raised on this lovely day was just shy of £700.

During the year we have had fabulous support from many different people and businesses'.

We thank you all...



Alison Jones with Jean-Christophe Novelli at Herefordshire Food Festival



Mandie Preece, Judy Hooley and Diane Gibson at the Broadfield Luncheon



Dean of Hereford's garden coffee morning



Maggie Matthews at the Jubilee Tea at Broadfield Court

The Toy Library at Ross-on-Wye run by Sandy Pryde and Kay Gray

SANDY PRYDE
Family Group Co-ordinator

Thursday mornings see families from Ross and the surrounding villages converge on the Toy Library, for a couple of hours of “me time” for both the children and their carers! We must have found the magic mix of fun and relaxation for all, because more than 90 young families have accessed the Toy Library since July 2011. At least 50 families return on a regular basis, they even attempt to arrange nursery places and appointments for other days of the week. Despite some inclement seasonal weather, our reputation for being the “sunshine group” still remains and much of our success can be put down to the idyllic venue at the Ryefield Centre, where access to a stimulating play garden enhances the indoor facilities.



We have been fortunate in gaining the weekly help from a Home-Start volunteer who kindly offers a welcoming drink to the carers on their arrival. She then stays to prepare a nutritious snack for the children, assisting the families and supporting the staff. This has helped enable Kay and myself to confidently spend time as required amongst families with any parenting worries.

A Health visitor now holds a baby weighing and advice clinic during the Toy Library hours. Many of our families who access this facility now leave older siblings happily playing with us whilst appointments are made. A breast feeding clinic is also currently being made available, resulting in new mothers and babies joining our soft play area for a little relaxation amongst the soft cushions before leaving for home.

Our young children are supported by a variety of carers, not only Mums, but we regularly have Dads, Grandparents, other family members as well as Home-Start and respite volunteers. Due to various cuts in local facilities, we now have a regular number of Child Minders who enjoy what we offer to their children. All this diversity of adult carers helps create an atmosphere where their youngsters develop a confidence and curiosity whilst playing and having fun in a safe secure environment.

Every Thursday has a special theme which incorporates all activities from the craft, to the inside and outside toys offered to the families, even the snack is included in our planning! As well as the obvious seasonal calendar, when we offer simple craft activities relating to the special occasions such as card and gift making, planting seeds and making bird feeders, we have received visits from the library, when an amazing storyteller arrived with her guitar, toys and a parachute, entrancing the youngsters with her talents.

The aim of the Toy Library remains that of making each and every Thursday morning a memorable one for both the children and their carers. Where each person feels valued and comfortable in their surroundings and what is offered, whether picnicing outside, enjoying singing and action rhyme time, taking an imaginary journey with tiny trains and cars, producing fabulous objects with messy paint and glue, digging in the sand or splashing about in bubbly water, even just enjoying a relaxing cuddle together after learning to ride a trike. We believe the Toy Library truly offers a haven of fun and laughter and look forward positively to meeting many new families in the future.

Highs and Lows of Kington Family Group

TAMRA THOMAS
Group Co-ordinator



What a year – we started with a very busy group. Several families had been with us for some time so a very easy comfortable group with some great friendships formed. September saw several of these families move on as children started schools and this brought a big change, we now had a quieter group, however slowly new faces joined us. By Christmas we were once again busy with all the Christmas crafts and activities and a lovely buzz again returned to our group.

Then we received the terrible news about the funding cuts. What a blow it was to our families, I had several tearful visits! We feared the worst then out of the blue came an offer of help from the local Churches Charity which would help us carry on – how fantastic this was to be supported and appreciated by the local community. This has given us a huge boost and made us feel very special.

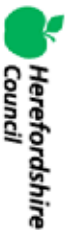
Financial Summary

Incoming resources	Year ending 31 March 2012	Year ending 31 March 2011
Donations	7,268	5,158
Fund raising income	4,222	23,808
Grants	150,692	145,043
Other income	1,675	1,167
	163,857	175,176
Resources expended		
Staff and volunteer costs	132,464	129,924
Fund raising costs	1,513	8,038
Office costs	13,726	14,136
Scheme expenses	16,142	17,136
Governance costs	1,282	965
	165,127	170,199
Net movement in funds		
Unrestricted funds	(3,169)	11,270
Restricted funds	1,899	(6,293)
Funds at 31 March		
Unrestricted	53,301	56,470
Restricted	3,913	2,014

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Hereford Times



Herefordshire

Treasurer's Report

ROB ELLAM
Treasurer

Income decreased by 6% during the year. Fund raising income was only partly offset by increases in donations and grants received.

Amounts were received from Eveson Charitable Trust, Herefordshire Council, Four Acre Trust, BBC Children in Need, Lloyds TSB, Santander, Cadbury, Bulmers, The Army Fund, Hereford Community Foundation, Southall Trust, Newgrove Trust, Pontillas Development and Allpay Ltd. 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.

Total expenditure decreased by 3% mainly as a result of lower costs associated with fund raising activities.

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, in excess of £80,000, are the optimum required to ensure continuity of operations and will continue to work towards this goal. Unrestricted funds at the end of the year were decreased to £53,301 by the deficit for the year of £3,169.



With great pleasure Home-Start Herefordshire welcomes 37 new home-visiting volunteers to the team. As fast as they can Barbara and Diane have been matching them with families so that they can begin their journeys putting their own experiences and their training to good use. Good luck and thank you to you all. But it is with sadness we bid farewell to 27 dedicated volunteers from the team, including a few who had been visiting families for many years. Thank you so much for the commitment you gave Home-Start Herefordshire.

During 2011/12 we have supported 161 families which would not have been possible without the 177 dedicated volunteers who have given their time this year to visit families

Home-Start Herefordshire, Suite 1 Lakeside offices, Unit 1A, Thorn Business Park, Rotherwas, Hereford, HR2 6JT
Telephone: 01432 371212 email: homestart.hereford@virgin.net web: www.home-startherefordshire.co.uk
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