"I realised that I am at home."

Stephen’s chaotic life was turned around with help from our donors.  
More on page 2

What we do:

- Helping rough sleepers.  
  > Page 3
- Small steps that rebuild lives.  
  > Page 4-5
- The power of exercise.  
  > Page 6
- A first trip to the seaside.  
  > Page 7

Rebuilding broken lives
When his parents divorced, Stephen left school at the age of 13 to help support his mum.

His anxiety and lack of education led to experimentation with drugs, and when he turned 17, his mum threw him out. His dad had a new family and Stephen had nowhere to go.

It was the beginning of decades spent living on the street. He became one of the dozens of homeless people you see huddled in shop doorways, in city centres across England, ignored by passers-by.

“There’s a kind of madness to homelessness,” he says. “You see someone open their business in the morning. You’re still there when they close. You’re detached and yet you’re a fixture.”

After his father divorced again, Stephen was able to live with him, and nursed him until his death from emphysema. Homeless yet again and grieving, he began to drink heavily: “One drink was too many and a thousand was not enough.”

Things went downhill from there, and Stephen bounced in and out of prison because of involvement with drugs, alcohol and violent gangs. Instead of being joyous, Christmas became a bitter reminder of his early childhood, and a life he felt he would never lead again.

“On the streets,” he says, “you would notice it was Christmas Day: bleak and cold, with not many people around. For those days everyone is with their family; you really are alone.”

After his release he moved to Peterborough, but desperately wanted to return to the area where he grew up. Stephen went back to Cambridge and slept in doorways. Last year, he was accepted into a scheme supported by Church Housing Trust.

“It was nice to have privacy and safety again,” he says. “I felt as if I had found home.”

Church Housing Trust takes great pride in funding innovative new projects that can reach out to these people, and show them they can rebuild their lives. Street Buddies, launched in January 2013 by service provider Riverside Care and Support, has been such a success it could become part of a nationwide approach to help entrenched rough sleepers.

The Street Buddies team is made up of volunteers. They have all had experience of street homelessness, and can approach other rough sleepers with empathy and understanding. They are also living examples that it is never too late to leave the streets and change your life.

The team helps rough sleepers to take their first steps re-engaging with services, and supports them throughout this process. They keep in touch when they move into their own accommodation, and offer tenancy support to those who are struggling.

The volunteers benefit too. Aside from building confidence in themselves, they act as role-models for others, and have the chance to stay in the position full-time.

For long-term, or ‘entrenched’ rough sleepers, going to a hostel and finding somewhere to live can be hugely daunting. Many have been let down in the past, ended up back on the street, and lack the confidence to try again.

Church Housing Trust takes great pride in funding innovative new projects that can reach out to these people, and show them they can rebuild their lives. Street Buddies, launched in January 2013 by service provider Riverside Care and Support, has been such a success it could become part of a nationwide approach to help entrenched rough sleepers.

For David, who had been on the streets for almost forty years, the idea that anyone could offer him a way out of sleeping rough seemed impossible. Until Gary, a former rough sleeper himself, spotted David on a regular patrol of known sleeping spots in Westminster, central London.

Gary said: “I am able to use my own experience when I make contact with rough sleepers. David had refused help from many outreach agencies, but once I won his trust I could work with my colleagues to get him into one of our specialist care and support centres, where we could help him look at what support he needed.”

“Tired. But more than that, he is glad to have found somewhere that he can finally call home.”
In the past six months, these are just some of the steps people have taken to rebuild their lives thanks to your donations...

1 A Warm Welcome

Rough sleepers like Jamie*, who arrive at The Quays hostel in Sittingbourne with only the clothes on their back, have new clothing for the winter.

There are welcome packs of toiletries and basic food items available for men and women taking their first steps out of street homelessness.

Individuals who self-harm will receive help in the form of journals and first aid kits, to help them work through their experiences and chaotic backgrounds.

Carla* will receive funding to get a new passport so that she has the ID required to volunteer and enrol on educational courses.

An outreach team in Wakefield will provide breakfasts and hot drinks for rough sleepers in order to build relationships and offer them further help.

2 Learning Life Skills

Residents of a hostel in Manchester will have Cook and Taste sessions, to help them learn to cook healthy, tasty food on a budget.

A talented young man who was homeless now has a second-hand laptop so that he can complete his Web and Game design course.

Colin*, a veteran, has been funded for his chef’s whites after completing Level One and Two food hygiene courses, so that he can begin a new career in catering.

John* was a hairdresser and now has the tools to return to his trade. He is also giving others at his hostel a welcome trim!

3 Building Confidence

People who have experienced long-term homelessness can now build their health and teamwork skills at regular, coached, football sessions.

Formerly homeless men and women in Hull spent a day paintballing to improve their teamwork skills, and to relax and socialise.

An anxiety and depression sufferer is now taking a humanistic counselling course so that she may help others with similar issues.

A group of men with special needs in Gloucester experienced the excitement of the great outdoors at a canoe day trip on the River Wye.

A group of men and women, who are homeless, visited Hindu temples and took part in an Indian cooking session to celebrate Black History month.

4 Moving On

Volunteers at the Art and Soul project in Liverpool can continue helping the project to provide therapeutic art, music and drama classes for former addicts.

In the past six months, we have helped 162 people move from hostels into their own homes.

‘Gate Buddies’ volunteers in Manchester have their expenses covered so that they can continue to meet and support ex-detainees as they leave prison.

Men and women leaving London to go to rehab and detox centres have a new bag and some new clothing to help them with their fresh start.

Veterans who are moving into their own homes have had their transport costs covered.

*Names have been changed to protect privacy.
Helping people to develop

Alongside supporting individuals on their journey out of homelessness, Church Housing Trust also raises funds for long-term, sustainable projects so that people without homes can learn essential skills and enhance their wellbeing.

Kitchen opens for people with learning disabilities
A scheme in Huddersfield that has 26 apartments for people with learning disabilities has had a specially designed, accessible kitchen installed.

Team Leader Jamie said “One customer chose the name ‘Rusty Chef’ as we are all ‘a bit rusty’!”

Church Housing Trust contributed to all three parts of the project – gardening at the two local allotments, communal cooking sessions, and the production of the specially designed cookery book. Altogether this programme will have a positive impact on the wellbeing, social and living skills of the customers.

Not only can residents develop their culinary skills, but they will grow the produce themselves. After a lot of planning and planting, the scheme will include two allotment spaces, which will include a plastic polytunnel greenhouse and a sensory garden.

Formerly homeless men and women develop their health and wellbeing
Exercise has been shown to have a hugely beneficial effect on people suffering from low self-esteem, mental health issues, or substance misuse problems. Church Housing Trust was pleased to fund gym equipment for homeless individuals at The Quays scheme in Sittingbourne, and we are now raising money to improve the building.

Gym sessions will be combined with regular cooking lessons to provide residents with a holistic approach to looking after their health, and leave them feeling in control. More than 300 homeless individuals and 700 members of the Kent community have already benefitted from catering and hospitality training at The Quays’ on-site community kitchen.

Many residents are already feeling the benefits and Church Housing Trust has provided several grants for people desperately in need of new, smaller, clothes!

Vulnerable women find a therapeutic space
Church Housing Trust is very pleased to have won a grant from the Big Lottery to fund a therapeutic garden for women without homes in Westminster.

Queen Mary’s in Westminster provides housing and support for 49 women with mental health issues. Some have schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, personality disorders, or a history of self-harming.

The garden will involve all five senses, with the specific aim of engaging the residents and offering them a sanctuary. It will become a safe space for both relaxation and activities, including a gazebo for private counselling sessions, and a BBQ area for summer parties that help residents to socialise.

The garden will be decorated with colourful windmills and chimes, while lighting will give residents access to the garden during the winter and provide a touch of magic on dark evenings. Finally, bird feeders, nesting boxes, and a water feature will encourage wildlife.

Homeless families get a welcome break
For many families and young adults, living in temporary accommodation in city centres, going to the beach can seem like an unrealistic dream.

But thanks to your funding, we helped 40 homeless women and children experience a day trip at the seaside – some for the first time in their lives.

Support workers arranged a trip for 19 adults and 21 children escaping domestic violence to visit the seaside at Scarborough. Most explored Scarborough in the morning, and then joined with staff and each other on the beach to build sandcastles, paddle and eat ice creams.

The adults agreed that it was a lovely day out that built their confidence and was a “nice taste of normality.”

Young homeless adults find something to focus on
A young man who had become homeless was given the chance to pursue his chosen career in security.

His drive to succeed, and our funding, meant he quickly got back on his feet.

28-year-old Amal* approached an Employment and Training officer shortly after moving into a hostel. “I always had a clear direction of what I wanted to do. It was hard but I never gave up,” he says.

He began to raise the money he would need to gain a Security Industry Authority licence. Recognising his potential, Amal’s keyworker John asked Church Housing Trust to provide the rest of the funding. This made Amal even more determined to successfully find work.

John said: “From day one, Amal was a ‘nice taste of normality’.

He now has a job, he is no longer homeless and is supporting his child.

Changes that transform lives

Find out the difference that a day out can make to young families, how a young man took control of his life when he got the encouragement he needed, and more about our new logo.

Introducing our new look
We hope you like our new logo! It represents home, a bright window into the future, and a cross that demonstrates the love of God.

Those of you who received our winter mailing will notice that the envelope had our old logo on it. This is because we are using up old envelope stock, but from now on everything will carry our new logo.

The new logo was developed alongside plans to increase the number of people we help. As factors such as high rents and low wages are pushing more people into homelessness, the need for donations is increasing. We aim to double our income in order to help twice as many people. But we know that many of our supporters already give us as much as they can. So we need to communicate what we do, and why we do it, to new audiences.

Please continue to remember us and the people we support in your prayers, and introduce your friends and family to the work we do.

*Names changed to protect privacy.
Who we are and what we do

Church Housing Trust's roots go back to 1882, when Revd Wilson Carlile began working with homeless people in central London.

We remain committed to supporting people who have been homeless or in crisis. We also support people who need ongoing help due to disability or illness. We fund the extra support for individuals that is not provided by government services.

We fund training, activities, and personal support; we pay for clothes and travel so that people are able to start volunteering or working; and we pay for basic household goods and furnishings when they move in to their own independent accommodation.

If you or your church plan to raise funds, or awareness, for homeless people, we’re happy to send you free materials about our work, including posters, leaflets, collection boxes and Gift Aid envelopes.

We can also provide event speakers who can give first-hand stories of how every donation helps to rebuild a life. Please get in touch for more information.

This is all thanks to you

We want to thank you for funding our work through donations, events and legacies. We are truly grateful for your committed support and prayers, and hope you will continue to talk about us with friends, family and colleagues. We can help with extra copies of this newsletter, posters, articles for your church magazine, or a speaker for a service. Please contact Nicole Holgate on Nicole.holgate@churchhousingtrust.org.uk. Every single donation helps towards rebuilding a person’s life.

Additional thanks to the churches that have donated so generously, including: All Saints’ Church, Trefonen; All Saints’ Church, Wingerworth; Market Harborough PCC; Neston PCC; Parish of All Saints, Thurlstone; Parish of St Mary’s, Kingskerswell; St John the Evangelist, Gloucestershire; St John The Evangelist, Farncombe; St Johns Church, Bamford; St Kentigern PCC, Crosthwaite; St Peter de Merton w St Cuthbert, Bedford; St Peter’s Parish Church, Ightham; St Thomas A Beckett, Lewes; St Thomas’ Parish Church, Manchester; Thornthwaite cum Braithwaite PCC, Keswick; Woolley PCC, Wakefield.

Patrons
The Rt Revd Dr David Walker; Sir Martin Berthoud KCVO, CMG; Susie Briscoe; David P G Cade; W Peter Cooke CBE; Ian Hay Davison CBE; Sir Philip Mawer; Michael Nicholson OBE; Rt Revd Michael Turnbull CBE; The Ven. David Woodhouse Cdr Robert Cribb MBE, RN (Retd); Christopher Daws; Revd Preb. Graham Earney; Leann Hearne; The Ven. Dr Colin Hill; Elizabeth Toher

Please give if you can

Please accept my/our donation of:  

☐ £250  ☐ £100  ☐ £50  ☐ £25  ☐ £15  ☐ Other £ ______

I enclose a ☐ cheque ☐ postal order ☐ charity voucher (payable to Church Housing Trust)

or charge my ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ CharityCard ☐ Maestro

Name ____________________________

Address ____________________________

Postcode ____________________________

Card number ________________

Expiry date ___________ Issue no. ___________  (Maestro only)

Phone ____________________________

Email ____________________________

☐ Please tick if you would prefer us to contact you by email only  ☐ Please tick if you do not require a receipt

☐ Please reclaim the tax on this and/or future donations (delete as applicable) until further notice. I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of UK Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) to which I donate will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify.

Signed ____________________________ Date ____________________________

This page contains gift aid declaration.

Please return your completed form to: Church Housing Trust, FREEPOST RLSA-CHCJ-LZJB, PO Box 50296, London EC1P 1WF

Winter 2015