

Remember a Charity

Did you know that an amazing 74% of the UK population regularly donate to charities, and that when asked, 35% of people say that they'd happily leave a gift to charity in their will once friends and family have been provided for?

The problem is that only 7% of people actually do.

Gifts in wills are vital to our very survival, a fact which many people may not realise. To raise some much needed awareness, we have joined forces with Remember a Charity, the largest consortium of its kind in the UK working to promote legacy giving.

You may have seen coverage in the media of Remember a Charity week, which took place from the 13th-19th of September and culminated in a special supplement in the Daily Telegraph. We had several photos from St James services included in Remember a Charity's special online 'Legacies through a Lens' photographic exhibition, which showed how legacy gifts can transform people's lives.

Even a small gift can make a very real difference, which means we can all do something amazing by leaving a gift in our wills to charity as well as providing for our friends and family.

We have recently published a new leaflet with more information about how to go about leaving a gift to us in your will. If you would like to receive this, just tick the box on the form below and fill out your contact details.

REMEMBER US IN YOUR WILL
Help our work live on...



One of the pictures from St James which was included in the 'Legacy Through a Lens' exhibition

the society of
st James
believing in your future

Opening Doors

The Newsletter of the Society of St James

Autumn 2010

The Society and Government spending cuts

By Trevor Pickup, Chief Executive

Writing this article on the day after the Comprehensive Spending Review in which the Government made the big announcements on public spending, it is still difficult to get a complete picture of how this will affect the Society as much of the detail is yet to be made public.

As we are a major recipient of local authority funding, the cuts of 28% to local councils over the next four years are a significant concern, but the Society shall wait to see how Southampton City Council plan to deal with this.

However, the picture is pretty grim.

In the short term, we do know we will be losing staff over the next few months. We have already had meetings with the Council to identify areas where cutbacks can be made. We anticipate having 4-5 fewer staff members by next Easter, as the first round of cutbacks begin to take effect. While this first round of cutbacks will not cause projects to close, it will mean a reduction in front line workers.

If savings in the region of 7% are to be made each year over the next 4 years, then further rounds of cutbacks will need to be made and projects will need to close. This will reduce the work that the Society is able to achieve with vulnerable adults in Southampton.

Spending cuts won't just affect our housing projects. Funding for drug treatment initiatives is also being reviewed, which is concerning for us, as it may impact upon our drugs services.

It is likely that the demand for our services will increase in the coming months and years. Changes to the Housing Benefit rules and other benefit changes are expected to increase financial pressure for those living in the private rented sector, with those less able to cope financially becoming homeless.

While the Society will continue to give the people in need of our services the best possible support, the months and years ahead will be challenging for all of us, and we will be relying on the support of our members, donors and the local community more than ever.



Funding for drugs services, like our open access drugs centre The Bridge, may be cut

Can you donate to St James?

Your support will transform the lives of homeless and vulnerable people in Southampton.

£5 could pay for a set of toiletries for someone who is moving into one of our houses or hostels

£15 could pay for a resident at Avondale, our care home, to go on a day trip to the New Forest

£30 could pay for a bed for the night at one of our hostels

£50 could pay for a pair of boots, a hi-vis waistcoat and a hard hat for someone on a work placement at the Jamie's Computers warehouse.



You can donate online at www.ssj.org.uk, or by filling out this form and sending it back to us at the address below.

Name.....

Address.....

Phone..... Email.....

- I would like to donate £.....
Please make all cheques payable to The Society of St James
- I would like more information about leaving a gift to St James in my will
- I would like to buy a calendar
I have enclosed a cheque for £9.50 payable to The Society of St James

Yes / No Please reclaim the tax on all my donations to The Society of St James. I am a UK tax payer and pay tax equal to or greater than the tax deducted from my donation.

Signature..... Date.....

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Health Kicks with the Saints

In August, 30 of our service users enjoyed a full guided tour of St Mary's Stadium thanks to our partners, Southampton FC. The tour kicked off our involvement with the Saints' brilliant Health Kicks programme, which promotes men's health by offering free football sessions, MOT health checks, support in stopping smoking, and sexual health information.

The tour was much enjoyed by all who came along, and was followed by a football training session at Hoglands Park with two of the Saints' coaches. The whole day was an amazing success. The service users involved really enjoyed it and talked about it for days afterwards.

Dan, one of those who took part, commented:

'The football training session was a good laugh, it was good to meet new people and do something different for the day. I really enjoyed myself and I am already looking forward to the next session.'

Some of our service users are now attending weekly football sessions with the coaches. Lisa Gowling, one of our support workers, says that the Health Kicks programme has had a real impact:

'The opportunities provided by Southampton FC have given clients who may lead a difficult and chaotic life the chance to do something positive for themselves on a weekly basis.'



Some of our service users enjoying a guided tour of St Mary's Stadium



St James calendar 2011

This year we worked with local schools to run a photography competition, with students taking pictures for us to represent the theme of 'Hope'. People had the opportunity to vote for their favourite photos via our website, and we received hundreds of votes. The winning six photos are featured in our new calendar, alongside images from our services.

You can order your copy by filling out the form on the back of this newsletter and sending it to us with a cheque for £9.50. Alternatively, you can purchase a calendar directly from our head

office at Fairways House or at Jamie's Computers for the reduced price of £8. You can also buy calendars from our website – just go to www.ssj.org.uk and click on the image of the calendar at the top right hand corner of the page.

We're moving!

In light of the government cuts, we are working hard make savings in any way that we can. One of the ways in which we have decided to save money is by moving our head office.

Our old hostel on Albert Road South has remained empty since its residents moved across to the Salvation Army's Booth Centre last summer. We have decided to relocate our head office to the building.

While this will involve making a few adaptations, it will mean that we do not need to pay any rent, which will be a huge saving for us.

We will be making the move early next year, and will publish our new contact details in our next newsletter in January.



Annual Report and our Service Users' Opinions

Over the summer, we have been scrutinising our performance to see how well we comply with the Tenant Services Authority's new standards for social housing. We used a questionnaire to ask all of our residents how they thought we were doing and how we could improve.

This information has been compiled into our 2010 Annual Report, which is available to view online at www.ssj.org.uk, or can be obtained by contacting our head office. Here are some of the key findings:

Good News

- 75.5% are satisfied with the services provided by St James
- 77.6% feel that St James staff treat them with fairness and respect
- 72.3% feel that their home is safe
- 75.1% feel that their home is well-maintained

Areas to improve

- 39.8% were aware of the Service User Focus Group, which involves service users in the running of St James.
 - 56.8% were aware of our Rent Assistance Fund, which helps residents who are not eligible for Housing Benefit to pay their service charge.
 - 69.2% think our services represent good value for money.
- We will address these areas by promoting our Service User Focus Group and Rent Assistance Fund better amongst our residents, and by giving them the chance to undertake training which will help them to better scrutinise our financial performance.

Our new look Annual Review

Now that we are publishing a new Annual Report to meet the Tenant Services Authority's standards for registered providers, our old-style Annual Report has been rebranded as the Annual Review. The Annual Review provides an overview of our work over the past year, including a breakdown of our finances. If you would like to read the Annual Review, it is available to view online at www.ssj.org.uk, or you can contact our head office to obtain a copy.

Training courses at Jamie's

We are running a new series of training courses at Jamie's Computers this autumn / winter:

Introduction to IT: Learn how to use Windows, the task bar, keyboard and mouse, open applications, and set up an email account. A great way to begin your exploration of IT.
11 November; 2 December

Microsoft Word: One of the best tools to use for letters, CVs and other documents. MS Word lets you add page numbers, clipart, and much more.
18 November; 16 December

The Internet & Facebook: Learn how to search the internet for information. Create & use a Facebook profile, which is a fun way to contact people you know and track down family and old friends. Protecting your privacy online will also be covered.
25 November; 9 December

All courses are taking place at Jamie's, 10:30am-12:30 pm.



Each course costs £25, which is payable in advance. To find out more or to book call (023) 8063 2198 or email enquiries@jamies.org.uk.

