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Dear Friends

I am pleased to introduce the second Welcare newsletter with information about our work, the difference our services are making for the children and families we support, and updates from our volunteers, fundraisers and centres.

In this edition we highlight the work delivered by our Greenwich centre and include some helpful tips for parenting boys.

As Lent begins, we often think about what we will give up for 40 days but this year I ask you to think also “*What can I put in?*”. To consider the ways you can contribute and be part of something that will be sustained and grow in the future. It is for this reason that we chose to launch our Individual Giving Scheme in the first week of Lent 2016. Please consider the benefits of a regular donation to support our work with families in need for future generations.

On Mothering Sunday (6th March) our President, the Bishop of Southwark, trustees and staff will speak about the work of Welcare at churches and other venues. We are so pleased that as a charity known in our history for

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pioneering outreach work with unmarried mothers, we are able to bring attention to our work on Mothering Sunday - traditionally the day when children who had gone to work as domestic servants were given a day off to visit their mother and family.

Whatever you will be doing over the February half-term or in preparation for Easter I would like to thank you for your support and interest in our work in South London, Bromley and East Surrey.

Please do send us any feedback or suggestions that you have about this newsletter and please share it with your friends, family and colleagues.

Best wishes,



Anna Khan Chief Executive

How We Have Helped

In the 3 months between 1st October and 31st December we worked intensively with 67 individual families, improving the lives of 141 children.



In addition, over 800 children and families have benefitted by attending groups and programmes and from signposting across all our centres since April 2015.

Volunteering

Our recruitment drive for new volunteers is in full swing and we have been so pleased with the overwhelming response! So far we have sent out over 50 application packs and are looking forward to seeing our first wave of applicants at our training sessions.

Whether you are a dab hand at Excel, think you'd be a good mentor to a child or are interested in assisting our Family Support Workers, we've got the volunteer role for you!

> [Find the volunteer role for you](http://welcare.org/volunteer)
welcare.org/volunteer

Key Dates

Lent

**10th February - 24th
March 2016**

**Mothering Sunday
6th March 2016**

**Vitality British
London 10k Run
10th July 2016**

**Annual Meeting
30th September 2016**



60 Second Interview!

Paul Pugsley is a volunteer Group Helper at our Greenwich centre. We asked Paul a few questions about volunteering with Welcare...

What brought you to Welcare?

"I came to Welcare to help me get back into work. I initially came for administrative



Centre Focus: Greenwich

In each issue we will spotlight on one of our centres to help you get to know our work a bit better...

Our centre in Greenwich is a busy and vibrant environment situated at the heart of the community in Nightingale Vale, Woolwich Common, serving the whole borough of Greenwich.

Our friendly 'home from home' centre provides a safe and approachable environment for families who have found it difficult to engage with other services. Our staff and volunteer team provide a value-for-money service that the local authority, local agencies and professionals can refer vulnerable families to, assured of the comprehensive support they will receive.

The main focus at our Greenwich centre is to work in a preventative capacity with parents, helping them cope better with challenges and ultimately to keep families together. Our priority is always the safety of the children and improving their future life chances.

We offer a new group each term that tackles issues affecting parents and families, such as mental health, substance misuse or domestic abuse. The need is significant and we always have a waiting list for our groups.

We run a 20 week parenting course specifically for parents with learning difficulties. To assist the learning needs of parents attending this group, each stage of the course is broken down into smaller steps, with the most important and helpful learning messages reinforced and repeated.

We also provide practical and emotional support to individual families to help improve communication, self-reliance, behaviour, healthy eating and lifestyles of both children and their parents.

experience but was asked if I would be happy to help out with the groups held at Greenwich Welcare. I have enjoyed the work we do"

What does your role include?

"I assist with running the parenting groups. I help to prepare for and set up the groups, I sometimes help with responding to initial contact with parents and their referrers, and anything else I can help with"

What do you like about volunteering with Welcare?

"I've really enjoyed meeting lots of new people and trying to help people make positive changes. I enjoy the people I work with as I feel it's like a family. I also love that it has given me lots of confidence that can be lost with being out of work so long"

Would you recommend volunteering to your friends?

"I'd highly recommend to anyone to volunteer as it gives you lots in return. I am grateful to Welcare for giving me an opportunity to volunteer with them as I have got so many positive experiences from my time with them"

In our crèche, staff use creative and positive play activities, demonstrating age-appropriate toys and activities for parents to better understand the development stages their children will go through and for them to model at home. For some of the parents that come to us, this can be the first time that they have been shown how to enjoy playing with their child.

Our work with local families is made possible by our Greenwich Friends of Welcare - our wonderful local supporters group. Their fundraising activities enable us to provide the 'extras' that make families feel more comfortable and ease their stress. Emergency food, toys and vouchers can make all the difference throughout the year.

Our Greenwich centre is currently recruiting for new Group Work volunteers. If you would like to find out more visit: welcare.org/greenwich.

Ariel and Johnny

Single mum, Ariel, was referred to our centre by social services. Following the breakdown of her relationship with her son, Johnny's, father, Ariel developed severe depression and began finding herself overwhelmed by raising Johnny alone. To give Ariel some breathing space to work on her own mental wellbeing and to develop her ability to provide the best environment for Johnny as a lone parent, he was taken into foster care aged 3.

Ariel came to Welcare to attend our ten week parenting skills course. She was initially anxious and found it difficult to participate. Within a few sessions, Ariel began to let her guard down and slowly engage with our support workers and other group attendees. She became more confident, both as a parent and an individual, and demonstrated an improved ability to care for and provide for her son.

On completing her course with Welcare, Ariel was allowed increased contact sessions with Johnny. She was able to show improved understanding of his learning development, establish daily routines and engage in a more healthy lifestyle. We also helped Ariel link in with local community parenting support such as her local children's centre.

Volunteer Training Dates

Effective Volunteer Training

Tuesday 23rd February

South East London Volunteer Get-Together

Thursday 25th February

Volunteering with Families Training: Part One

Thursday 3rd March

Volunteering with Families Training: Part Two

Saturday 12th March

Safeguarding & Case Recording Training

Friday 18th March

All training takes place at: Welcare Central Office, 19 Frederick Crescent, London, SW9 6XN. Training sessions are for Welcare volunteers.



The dramatic turnaround in Ariel's parenting skills and coping with her own mental health demonstrated her ability to provide suitable care for Johnny, and he was returned home to her care. Ariel said of the difference Welcare's support has made, "I have been able to rebuild a relationship with my son and can actually say that I feel like a confident parent now. I have truly felt supported by the Welcare team."

> [Donate now to help us make a difference for other families like Ariel and Johnny welcare.org/donate](https://www.welcare.org/donate)

Parenting Boys

Helping parents, especially mothers, to understand their sons and encourage them to reach their potential is just one of the ways we help parents to help their children.

Recent evidence has suggested that while 74% of girls achieve 'school readiness' successfully, only 59% of boys do. The percentage of boys achieving Good Levels of Development, which measure communication and language skills, physical development and social and emotional maturity, are all lower for boys than girls when they start school.

In response to this evidence and the needs of local parents, our centre in East Surrey organised a 4 week course, *Let's Talk About Boys*, and hosted an evening talk for 75 parents, *Making it Better for Boys*, on 2nd February presented by Ali McClure, author of the book *Making it Better for Boys*.

Below, with thanks to Ali, is a short summary of some of her helpful tips for parents of young boys, much of which is applicable to sons of any age:

- Boys' brains and bodies are driven by the hormone testosterone. We all have this in various amounts but the effects are most obvious in boys. Boys are likely to be better at tasks where moving or pictures and images are involved. Sitting still is almost impossible. Young boys need to move
- Boys are less likely to be strong in language, attention to details and orderly sequences, all things needed for reading and writing. Encourage boys to read books of their choice, these may include factual books and comics
- Boys typically have fewer connections between the two sides of the brain; boys focus on one thing at a time

Boys are geared up to be able to survive which explains why they need to be the best, investigate, explore and turn every stick into a weapon. It also explains why they are very sensitive to criticism, especially if it is in front of others. What can we actually do to make it better for boys?



- We can stop before we dive in and comment on their behaviour and if we need to correct, channel or criticise we can do it discreetly, quietly and respectfully
 - We can get eye-contact before we speak to them and use a calm, respectful voice
 - We can give one clear instruction at a time using fewer wordy explanations. If we give them short, achievable tasks then when they have achieved them we can praise our boys specifically for what they have achieved
 - We can spend fun time with our boys and make sure they have access to good male role models
 - We can try to be angry less often. Notice the things they like, that they do well and build on their strengths
 - Most importantly we can let them have space and time to run, to move, to climb, to take risks, to challenge themselves
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The Best Start in Life for More Children



We are delighted to have launched our individual giving scheme this week. Our first mailing will be delivered to our dedicated supporters over the next few days, introducing them to Claire and Jodie, a mother and daughter we supported through a difficult time after mother Claire developed MS.

We want to give all our supporters a simple and easy way to help make a

direct difference and ensure more families are able to turn to Welcare in their time of need now and in the future.

This will really help us plan for a stable future for our services. We will talk about the scheme when we speak to church congregations. We hope you will sign up for as much as you are able to and we'd love it if you could also spread the word amongst your families, friends and colleagues to help us get people signed up to support Welcare!

> Visit welcare.org/herealways for more details

Bromley Little Theatre

Our Bromley Friends continue their close relationship with the Bromley Little Theatre with a group of Welcare friends and supporters packing out a performance on 11th February. A fantastic £1,276 was raised at an entertaining evening enjoyed by all. Thank you to all who joined and helped raised funds for local children and families in need, to those who helped organise the event and to Bromley Little Theatre.

Host a Lent Lunch

Pick your favourite soup, your favourite people and support us this Lent by holding a fundraising lunch in aid of Welcare! Whether it's for a small group of friends in your home, a group of colleagues in the break room or a larger gathering in your church hall, this is a great social way to raise funds for local families in need.



Lent 2016 runs from 10th February to 24th March. [Download your fillable poster](#)

and donation form now to get started or request a fundraising pack which will include a banner, posters and leaflets to help you spread the word about your event and make your lunch run smoothly.

> Get your fundraising pack now welcare.org/lentlunch



Run with Welcare

Promised yourself that 2016 is the year to get fit? Catch that running (or jogging or walking!) bug and join Team Welcare for the [Vitality British London 10k Run](#) on Sunday 10th July!

Welcare has places in this fun and exciting event that takes place through central London past some of the city's most famous attractions. You can join Team Welcare either by buying a place through us for £25 with a pledge to fundraise at least £150, or by buying your own place directly and then letting us know you would like to fundraise for Welcare with no minimum fundraising amount.

Why not challenge yourself or get a team together of your friends or colleagues? We will be with you every step of the way with regular emails of support, training and fundraising tips, a Welcare running vest and a cheer team on the day!

> Find out more! welcare.org/british10k

Theresa's Run for Welcare



We are very proud of our own staff runner, Theresa Louison, from our East Surrey centre who ran the Reigate Half Marathon on 20th September 2015. Theresa has so far raised an amazing £1,095.83 with some money still coming in! Congratulations to Theresa and thank you so much to all those who sponsored her and cheered her on. Well done Theresa!

Christmas Fairs, Toys and Carols

Over the Christmas period a number of our Friends and supporters helped to make the festive period that bit easier for the children and families that we support. There were toy giving events, vouchers donated, Christmas Fair stalls manned and carols sung, raising awareness and funds for Welcare's work and easing the economic stress for families we work with. It was a brilliant and festive Christmas period, and we want to thank all those who helped over the Christmas period which can be an especially hard time for our families.



> Raise funds for Welcare your way welcare.org/fundraise



Our Centres

Bromley
Greenwich
Redhill
Richmond
Wandsworth

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Welcare is a family-focused charity based on Christian values that is dedicated to helping children and families overcome challenges in their lives and build towards a better future.