

Recently I was talking with a person who was homeless. The conversation had turned to prayer and he mentioned to me that he wrote prayers. I asked him if he'd mind sending me some. He was very happy to and soon after I used one of these prayers at a national meeting.

That was his gift to me, to them and to God. So often we can think that those who are homeless are always on the receiving end. It is possible for each of us to think that we are the givers. There is, however, a mysterious interchange when any of us is involved in acts of loving kindness; both parties are enriched.

You will read in this edition about how primary schools through the Good Shepherd appeal support the work of Father Hudson's Care, how the Mayor of Coleshill has very

generously chosen us as her charity of the year, about the work of the Ball committee and their support for the Young at Heart groups in North Staffordshire and New Routes fostering. You will read about how the Family Support Service in schools is sharing their story at the Education Show. When you read about the Embrace project in Worcester Deanery you may stop and think what a great name Embrace is. How well it sums up the spirit of this new service, which wishes to embrace isolated, vulnerable older people just as the prodigal Father embraced his returning son!

And yet, in all of this giving, those who work at Father Hudson's are fully aware that we are at the receiving end of both your incredible support and of the warm humanity of those whom we serve. Thank you.

Andy Quinn, Chief Executive

Primary schools help care for people in need

With odd shoe days, sponsored events, bake sales and other creative activities, primary schools across the diocese have been working hard to help people in need through the annual Good Shepherd Appeal.

The appeal teaches children about the breadth of our work, inspires them to think of others and motivates them to help their neighbours.

During the spring term and Lent, fundraisers Margot Scotford, Lucy Davis and Debbie Burns deliver around 100 Good Shepherd Assemblies at primary schools. They tell the students about

one or two key areas of our work, inspiring them with examples of how their fundraising makes a difference to the lives of others.

Many children take home Good Shepherd collection boxes to fill with donations from family members and coins they might otherwise have spent on treats for themselves. This reminds them of the loving sacrifice Christ made for mankind and shows them they can make a difference to those in need through almsgiving.

The appeal ends with seven Good Shepherd Masses full of colour, worship and song in which schools celebrate their efforts and present their collections to the diocesan bishops.



Money raised through the appeal helps sustain our work with children, adults and families across the diocese, helping ensure existing projects can continue as well as finding new ways to reach out to more people in need.



Credit: Martyn Adams

Vote of confidence from Mayor of Coleshill

Father Hudson's Care is delighted to have been selected as the Mayor's Charity by Coleshill's Mayor, Cllr Sue Wallace.

This exciting news means that our work will benefit from fundraising events held in the town and helps deepen our ties with the community we have called home since 1902.

Cllr Wallace said, "The length of time Father Hudson's has worked in our community is very important. We are very proud to have Father Hudson's Care established locally and to honour the work of George Hudson."

She praised the wide array of work carried out with people from different areas and communities, saying this is one reason why she chose Father Hudson's as her charity. She said, "The range of work and people whose lives are enhanced by that work from newborn babies to the elderly ... it

covers everything. The work and care of Father Hudson's spans all things, from women who have fallen on hard times, refugees and migrants, children and care for older people. It sees people through their lives.

"I feel a personal connection to Father Hudson's and I am so grateful for the work they do in Coleshill and further afield. I wanted to do something in my own way to say thank you."

Father Hudson's Care is grateful to Cllr Wallace for her steadfast support. From opening independent living apartments at St Vincent's House, to attending the Annual Fundraising Ball, supporting our charitable work and much more besides, her support for our work is inspiring and greatly appreciated.

Fun and fundraising at 113th Annual Ball

A great night was had by all at the 113th Annual Fundraising Ball. Held on 18 February at the National Conference Centre near Birmingham, the event drew guests from across the diocese to enjoy a night of dinner and dancing in aid of charity.

While the final figure is still to be confirmed, it looks to have raised a brilliant amount. The proceeds will be



Service supports families and strengthens schools

Members of the Family Support in Schools service will be at the Education Show at the NEC from 16 – 18 March, talking about their work.

Schools commission the service to work with children, young people and families identified as needing support, particularly where a child’s education is affected. Support workers address the root of the problem and help the family

used by New Routes Fostering to develop health and educational opportunities for the children and young people in their care. And it will help sustain Young at Heart’s work with vulnerable and isolated older people.

Once again The Marmites got the dancefloor jumping to hits from across the decades, followed by a DJ set, taking the event on into the early hours.

Pez Anson Photography returned to take photos of guests which they could then purchase on the night, with Pez donating his proceeds to the total. Volunteer Martyn Adams captured beautiful action photos.

New for this year was a silent auction, which proved to be a hit, as well as the popular raffle and tombola. Vintage wine, rugs, toiletry hampers and



chocolates were just some of the prizes up for grabs. There were also hotel breaks, a bicycle and tickets to the Para Athletics at the Olympic Stadium.

Guests heard moving speeches about the two projects being supported—a wonderful opportunity to learn how they were making a difference to two very deserving causes.

Thank you to all who supported the night and those who came along and helped make the event a success.

access support. They offer one-to-one sessions, group work and other support, as well as helping access services such as counselling, legal advice and funding.

The service also benefits schools by improving attendance and behaviour, increasing pupil attainment and reducing the amount of time school staff spend supporting disengaged families. The service is tailored for each school, ensuring it meets the needs of pupils and staff at that school.



Schools interested in the service can talk to staff at the Education Show or find information, including testimonies from schools and families, on our website, www.fatherhudsons.org.uk.

New service to reach out to people in Worcester

Jane Bamber joins Father Hudson’s Care to lead the new Embrace project in Worcester Deanery — part of a national CSAN programme tackling loneliness in older people. Worcester Deanery is one of four areas chosen for the pilot, which will support communities to develop local services.

Jane, who has a background in the voluntary sector, is eager to start making a difference. She said, “I am really excited about the Embrace project, as I feel it is a chance for joined-up support for our ageing population in the Worcester area.”

Embrace will look at what support already exists and what is needed. The resulting services will be different in each area, according to the needs of the

people in that area. Jane said, “A key focus will be supporting existing services, groups and individuals to do more. This could be supporting them to set up a telephone befriending or pen pal service, helping recruit more volunteers or getting referrals to their service.”

The programme’s wider aims are for the pilot areas to develop models of support that can be replicated throughout the country. Eventually they aim to build a national network of Caritas caring parishes that can grow services for vulnerable people.

While the long-term aims are ambitious, Jane is keen to have an effect on a local level. She wants Embrace to give people a sense of belonging and help them become part of their



communities. She said, “Embrace will be about connecting lonely and isolated individuals back into their local parish and community, which will lead to joined-up, sustainable services across the Worcester Deanery.”

This exciting new project not only allows Father Hudson’s to be part of a national initiative, it also enables us to further our mission of supporting vulnerable people across the Archdiocese of Birmingham.