

Faithworks and the Five Ways to Well-being – a Case Study

Faithworks Wessex aims to inspire and equip people on their journey out of isolation and poverty. They work to bring hope: **Relational Hope** to older people, carers, lone parents and people with dementia; **Financial Hope** to help people gain control of budgeting their finances; **Physical Hope** for those in need by working with local foodbanks and those who help the homeless; They also give **Spiritual Hope** by supporting and equipping the local Church to make a difference. They are a Christ centred organisation.

Faithworks works in a variety of ways. They lead projects, they support and enable others to help and they train and empower volunteers. They work with statutory and voluntary sector groups and they advise the local Church on how to bring hope to its local community.

The help and the hope that Faithworks bring is very practical and often addresses basic physical needs for example supporting rough sleepers and those in need of help from a food bank. They help people in crisis get out of it and then stay out. Their work also impacts on their service users' health, often by addressing the Five Ways to Well-being.

Connecting People

Faithworks helps isolated people connect with others. They may be older people, carers, families facing dementia, women escaping domestic abuse or lone parent families. In 2015 they helped 320 people feel less lonely. Their earliest work involved connecting with older people and they provide a long term link for many with coffee groups and cooking groups where people can meet to cook and eat. They work with the local council to befriend and support carers and help them make connections with others to ease their isolation. They also help 50 local churches develop into



Dementia friendly communities by raising awareness and understanding, so that people with dementia and their carers can feel included and connected.

Their SMILE project connects with lone parent families, giving them after school groups and activities to attend and a chance to build self-esteem. Their domestic abuse support group allows women coming out of abuse or trafficking to meet, connect with others and build confidence. Faithworks works with over 20 churches in BCARS (Bournemouth Christians Against Rough Sleeping) to connect with the homeless and rough sleepers; people affected by poverty, chaos and addiction. By bringing soup runs into buildings, there is more opportunity to build a framework so that helpers can connect with people and start to build relationships as well as enabling them to access practical help.

Being active

Faithworks organise Red Letter Day events – in 2015 over 90 people attended trips and events where people could enjoy a special day out with different activities and make new connections with others. These Red Letter Days have included a music therapy day for Dementia patients and their carers. Members of the arm-chair keep fit stay active at the classes organised by Faithworks, an opportunity for older people with 10 to 12 people attending regularly. They also organised Intergenerational Days at Oak Academy providing opportunities for older people to join with pupils to talk, reminisce and give the younger people valuable insights into their history by actively sharing their experiences. Service users have also been involved in the COAST gardening project, keeping active outside with physical exercise to tend the plants and soil. The cook, meet and eat groups provide an opportunity for people to gather and enjoy cooking and then eating together as an activity and the SMILE-It's Friday group provides after school activities for lone parent families.



Keep Learning

Faithworks provide Community Money Advice advisors and lower key Budget coaches to help people to take control of their debt. Together they were able to deal with over £500,000 worth of debt. They help people learn the new skills they require to manage their finances. In 2015, 18 new volunteers were trained in debt advice. They also run courses on money management for the probation service, YMCA, schools and first year students at Bournemouth and Poole College. They help people learn the skills they need to get out of or stay out of debt.

The SMILE project for lone parents set up a fishing group in the summer holidays. The group supports and mentor's sons while helping them learn new key and life skills and enjoy a new hobby. The older people in the meet and eat groups have an opportunity to learn new cookery skills and to try out new meals.

An intergenerational ICT project with Bournemouth School for Girls and the Bishop of Winchester School enabled older people to gain IT skills by learning from young people, who in turn were able to connect and learn about older people and their lives.

Taking notice



singing with.

Many of the activities organised by Faithworks provide opportunities for people to take notice of their surroundings and to be curious. For example, watching things grow and taking notice of others as they share the work at the gardening project or by noticing the natural world around them and the behaviour of the fish they try to catch at the SMILE fishing group. By enjoying singing people have a chance to take notice of the music, rhythm and melody, and those they are

People enjoy appreciating the food they cook and eat, being more aware of their creations as they have made them together. As they work together they also take notice of each other, talking as they cook and noticing who needs help as they work as a team.

Another Red Letter Day activity was a trip to Farmer Palmers where people were able to take notice and be curious of their agricultural and natural surroundings, and to find out about the animals and how to care for them.

Giving

Giving is an important part of Faithworks. Groups such as the regular coffee groups for older people are an opportunity for the members to give friendship and support to each other. The meet, cook and eat groups give of their time and skills to share food with others. The SMILE project is a chance for families to meet and give support to each other. All of these groups bring a way for people to come and share their stories and grow to understand one another. Some service users develop and grow into volunteers themselves, getting to a stage where they can train others and share their skills.



Faithworks provides opportunities for about 350 volunteers to give their time and skills to support their 6,100 (approximately) service users each year. They volunteer in food banks, as befrienders and telephone befrienders, supporting rough sleepers and as administrators in the office. Faithworks volunteers are very committed and value their chance to give. Giving in turn is impacting on their own well-being as they work to bring hope to others.

Faithworks received 25% of their 2015 funding of £302,000 through donations. They also receive donations of items from the public, for example kitchen utensils and sleeping bags for the sleeping bag exchange

for rough sleepers.

Bournemouth CVS and Poole CVS are working with Public Health Dorset to support local voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations to deliver better public health outcomes. This project is to help the sector measure and demonstrate the impact their work has on health and wellbeing in their communities. These case studies are designed to highlight the varied and substantial impact VCSE organisations have on the Five Ways to Wellbeing. The Five Ways to Wellbeing is a tool comprising of a set of five, evidence based public health indicators about the kinds of activities that individuals can do that are known to improve their health and wellbeing: Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give.

To learn more about the work of the Bournemouth and Poole VCSE sector please contact Liz Cooper 01202 682046, liz.cooper@poolecvs.org.uk

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