

Family Friends

2016

GIRLS IN GANGS:

How we're using music to combat gang membership in Manchester

CHANGE A LIFE FOR £320

with our Open Doors welfare grants programme

PLUS:

A gift in your will:
A lasting memory



Building
stronger
families

Welcome to our 2016 edition of Family Friends, our supporter magazine.

It's been a busy year at Family Action, and we're delighted to share with you our news and updates, along with some of the stories from families and individuals you have enabled us to support.

I hope you enjoy reading about some of our exciting new services, in Manchester, Medway and Wales, and seeing the lovely photos of the families with whom we have been Creating Happy Memories.

We were delighted to wish our Patron, HM Queen Elizabeth II, a very happy 90th Birthday this year. As one of The Queen's charities, it was an honour to spend the day with frontline staff, service users and volunteers at the Patron's Lunch on the Mall in June to celebrate The Queen's Birthday. It was such a special day.

Throughout the year I've loved hearing about the challenges you've taken on, events you've attended and campaigns you have supported to raise money for our work. Through your fantastic support you enable us to transform lives.

Thank you for all your support over the past year and please do get in touch with us if you would like to get more involved with Family Action.

You help us to be there for families when they need us most.

Family Action Head Office
24 Angel Gate, City Road,
London EC1V 2PT
T: 020 7254 6251
info@family-action.org.uk
www.family-action.org.uk

Registered as a Charity in England & Wales no: 264713.
Registered as a Charity in the Isle of Man no: 1206.
Registered Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales: 01068186.

Patron: Her Majesty the Queen.
Chair: Bryan Portman MBA FCCA FCIS
Chief Executive: David Holmes CBE
Vice Patrons: Christine Davies CBE, Dr Andrew McCulloch,
Dame Denise Platt DBE, Katie Vanneck-Smith, Professor
Harriet Ward CBE

Happy 90th Your Majesty!

As one of the Queen's Patron Charities, we were proud to celebrate Her Majesty's birthday at an event celebrating the monarch's support of the community and charities. 12 lucky people from Family Action, including staff, service users, volunteers and donors attended the Patron's Lunch on June 16th on The Mall in Central London.

"We were honoured and privileged to be at an event that was so special and felt like a great piece of history. We felt very humbled and special to be allowed to be part of this day, it will never be forgotten."

**Jayne, Family Support Worker,
Southend**

"It was indeed a memorable day for me attending Her Majesty's 90th birthday celebrations with people belonging to her patronage of charities. I look at my journey with Family Action and it just amazes me to see how I have progressed from the receiving end of it to volunteering. I have experienced

how a Patron's Charity can make a difference. The highlight of the day was seeing the Royals, for whom we braved the rain"
**Amina, parent and
volunteer, Birmingham**



Thank you.
Warm regards,

**David Holmes CBE,
Chief Executive**



Contents

Welcome from our Chief Executive	Page 2
Caring for the Carers	Page 3
Our Open Doors Grants Programme	Page 4-5
New to the Family...	Page 6
A Big Thank You	Page 7
Your Support	Page 8

Caring for the Carers

Sometimes the pressures at home for young carers can have a huge impact on their school and social life. Our dedicated teams make sure someone is caring for them, and give them the space to enjoy being young...

Jenny:

Family Action Young Carers' Worker
'Family Action Young Carers projects are all about recognising that teenagers (and even younger kids) have a lot going on anyway. So if they have the extra responsibilities of looking after a parent, or maybe a brother or sister then it's bound to have an impact. Not least it might affect how they're doing at school and their health or wellbeing - as they'll only have limited time for themselves. And let's be honest, it's not always a lot of fun is it? So that can have a knock-on effect on how they come across. They might seem more grown up than they really are. Many young carers can appear pre-occupied, even miserable or angry. Young carers have different experiences from those of their peers, making them feel isolated - and sometimes making them vulnerable too. It's easy to forget that...

Alicia is a young woman who can probably come across as a bit unapproachable - simply because of the way she looks, and how she acts. But if you get to know her as I have you'll find out that she can feel very much alone - without the guidance and nurturing that many of us may have taken for granted growing up. When she started coming to the group we picked up very quickly that she had a lot going on. She needed advice about college, managing money, that kind of thing. Once we got to

know her better, she shared more personal dilemmas. For instance, she was in a relationship where she was being pushed to do things she wasn't comfortable with - and not knowing how to make it stop.



But don't think our work is all about problems! We're also here to make a space where young carers can let go of some of their everyday burdens. Watch a movie. Have a day out. Do something for themselves which they enjoy - and hopefully make some friends along the way...'

Alicia

There is a bit of a weight on my shoulders that's true. I'm seventeen now and it's just me and my mum. She has muscular dystrophy which means she's in a wheelchair... so I do all

the housework and I shower her, put her to bed - all that... Going to Jenny's group has helped me get the extra Maths and English support that Mum couldn't afford. I can do my homework there too - in a bit of peace and quiet. 'Cos I want to go on studying. Be a dentist. But I need to get my grades up to do that. And having someone who can give you tips, tell you how to cope with the stresses. That does help. 'Specially if they're like Jenny, and they make you feel comfortable. You know there's someone there for you...

And it's a chance to meet other girls. You find out you're not the only one doing what you do. It's someone to go out with. To go shopping with. 'Cos I like my clothes. I like to look good! Jenny putting me in touch with people like me who won't judge, and who understand has really helped. Because it can be lonely when you bottle it up and it's all on you. Going out together, having a bit of a laugh. You just forget about your worries for a little while. And thinking about something coming up, at the group or in the holidays - It's something to look forward to isn't it?'

"I do all the housework and I shower her, put her to bed - all that..."

Opening Doors,

Since 2013, our Open Doors Programme has been changing the lives of people across the UK facing severe and multiple disadvantages, through the provision of small cash grants of around £320. Set up and extensively evaluated thanks to the generosity of LankellyChase, the programme provides grants for people who are not only living in extreme poverty, but are also struggling with a range of other issues. These may include severe mental health problems, homelessness, domestic abuse, sexual exploitation and substance misuse.

Importantly, grants are only given to those who are receiving professional support through a variety of programmes from Family Action or partner organisations, including substance misuse services, support for

for recipients to tackle the underlying causes of their problems. This makes it easier for families to focus on and work through the bigger issues they're facing.

Open Doors grants, coupled with appropriate, holistic, support enable transformational steps for people in need. They help make a house a home – a starting point for those receiving support to be safe and secure. They also enable recipients to feel secure about themselves in terms of their ability to provide for their families and their standing in the community. On a practical level they are covering some of the most basic needs of the recipient – curtains so a mother who has fled domestic abuse can feel safe in

The practical benefits of a grant are obvious, but our evaluation revealed that whilst only 14% of recipients felt in control of their lives before receiving the grant, after receiving it over 70% of the same group felt in control. Being given some responsibility creates feelings of confidence, value and worth.

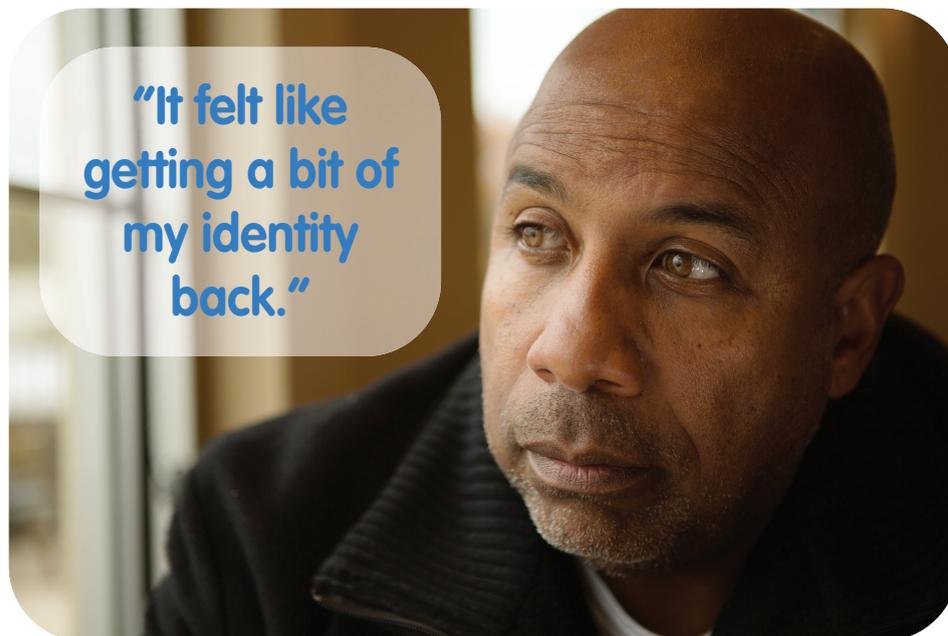
“They help make a house a home”

Austerity measures, increased economic uncertainty and a reduction in Local Welfare Provision are impacting the most vulnerable in society – such as those who are fleeing domestic abuse, those with mental health problems and those experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. We have seen an increase in demand for grants.

We urgently need funding to continue and grow the service.

“It seems a small thing, having clothes, but it has meant that I can apply for jobs and that I can go out of the house feeling confident. It felt like getting a bit of my identity back. My grant has made a huge difference.”

Grant recipient



“It felt like getting a bit of my identity back.”

victims of domestic abuse and parenting programmes. Due to their financial positions, people are often unable to fully engage with the support needed to change their lives. Removing immediate barriers, threats and stresses creates time and space

her new home, new clothes for a young person to wear for a job interview or home furnishings for someone moving into an unfurnished house after a period of homelessness.

Changing Lives

Aggie's Story

Aggie was experiencing domestic abuse and mental health issues. She is in her late 60s and had to flee from her abusive husband. The refuge helped her find a safe and permanent home.

'I keep reminding myself that I am the victim, I have done nothing wrong. When I moved in I had just two suitcases, my clothes and bedding. I slept on a blow-up mattress on the floor. I

had nothing. The grant has been a safety net, it got me lots of things you need to make a home.'

'Without the grant, I would have been miserable. I am determined to make this place mine. I used to be scared of life. I had everything but I was scared of life. Now I know I am safe. You can have a beautiful house, with lovely things but it is what is going on inside that really matters.'

'My worker really helps me. It is good to have someone to talk to and she pushes me too. She is

very reassuring. She knows that I want to keep my independence. Since I got the grant, I am more confident, just having some money in your purse makes you more confident.'

'Since I received my grant and got sorted here, I feel more assertive. I am not letting my partner sell our old home from under me. The support has really helped me, it has made a big difference. Knowing that you have a little bit of money in your purse, planning things step by step, it's allowing me to put down roots, I am not moving again.'



You can change a life through Open Doors:

Donate £320 today and help someone get back on track

Set up a direct debit: Just £25 a month will change a life over one year

When donating, please let us know that you wish to support our Open Doors Grants Programme.

New to the Family...

West into Wales

Family Action has teamed up with the charity Atal y Fro to deliver our new 'Families Together' service across Wales. The project is a fully integrated and holistic family support service for children and families facing multiple and complex needs. In particular, it focuses on supporting families in the perinatal period and those experiencing domestic abuse. Support includes services for couples who wish to stay together or separate amicably, supporting victims of abuse and working with perpetrators to enable them to acknowledge their behaviour and make positive changes. Families Together will also offer volunteer befriending support to women who are pregnant or have a baby.

Supporting Girls in Gangs in Manchester

Together we have supported 20 young women to take part in an intensive five day film and music workshop. The workshop developed a sense of belonging in the group, improving their self confidence and helping them find a sense of identity.

Alongside this creative work, Family Action will continue to support their emotional and social needs.

Dad's the Word!

Research has shown that children who have good relationships with their fathers do better at school, have higher self-esteem and are unlikely to get involved in criminal activities. For some fathers, the transition to fatherhood can be difficult, especially if they have mental ill health or have had a difficult childhood themselves.



Our new PAPAS service in Medway gives new dads access to group support, professional advice and peer befrienders.

Tea with the Mayor of Camden, by Cacharel, Young Carer.



"At one of the young carer events the Mayor of Camden was invited and she was so impressed by us that she invited us for tea. Tea with the Mayor was wonderful we were taken into a dead posh room and we were all trying to be as polite as possible tearing our sandwiches into tiny pieces and putting out

our pinkie finger when we were drinking our tea. But we did not just eat - we were shown into the parlour where the Mayor would sit in her chair and would discuss important things with the consort. I was lucky enough to sit in the Mayor's chair. After that we went back into the room and we played a game called "Ask it" and sadly after a splendid day we had to go home."

Supporting Family Action

We are very grateful for the ongoing generosity of our supporters. There are lots of ways to support Family Action, to help us to continue to deliver much needed and innovative services for families. Here are just a few ideas:

Celebrate the life of a loved one

Remember someone special through suggesting donations instead of flowers at their funeral, or by setting up an in-memorial collection or fund afterwards. Contact our supportive team who can talk you through the options on how to do this.



A lasting gift

A Will may be one of the most important documents you'll ever write. Once you've taken care of loved ones, why not consider leaving a gift in your Will to help children and families build brighter futures for themselves? The legacy gifts that Family Action receives are essential for enabling us to innovate to meet the changing needs of vulnerable families.



Share the love on your Special Day

If you're planning a wedding this year, why not consider setting up a Justgiving page and ask guests to donate in lieu of gifts.

www.justgiving.com/familyaction



Contact fundraising@family-action.org.uk for more information

Would your workplace or community group be able to collect toys for our children and young people for this year's Family Action Christmas Toy Appeal? The appeal kicks off in October and we hope to beat last year's record of 6,000 gifts.

Please contact fundraising@family-action.org.uk or call 020 7241 7639 to find out more about how to get involved.

Family Action's Training and Consultancy services

Family Action now offers a range of training services, drawing upon our rich history and depth of experience in supporting vulnerable families. Amongst other things, we have expertise in supporting organisations and their employees to maintain a good work-life balance, and gain a better understanding of mental health first aid. Any HR professionals wishing to find out more can do so by visiting our website. www.family-action.org.uk/training



TOY Appeal

Thank you!!

Your support has continued to enable Family Action to deliver more for the many families we work with. Through your generosity, our 'Creating Happy Memories' campaign has provided day trips and fun events for hundreds of our service users. Through the Christmas Toy Appeal, 6,000 children received a much needed gift and festive cheer. Your help has truly put smiles on all these faces!



CREATING HAPPY MEMORIES

