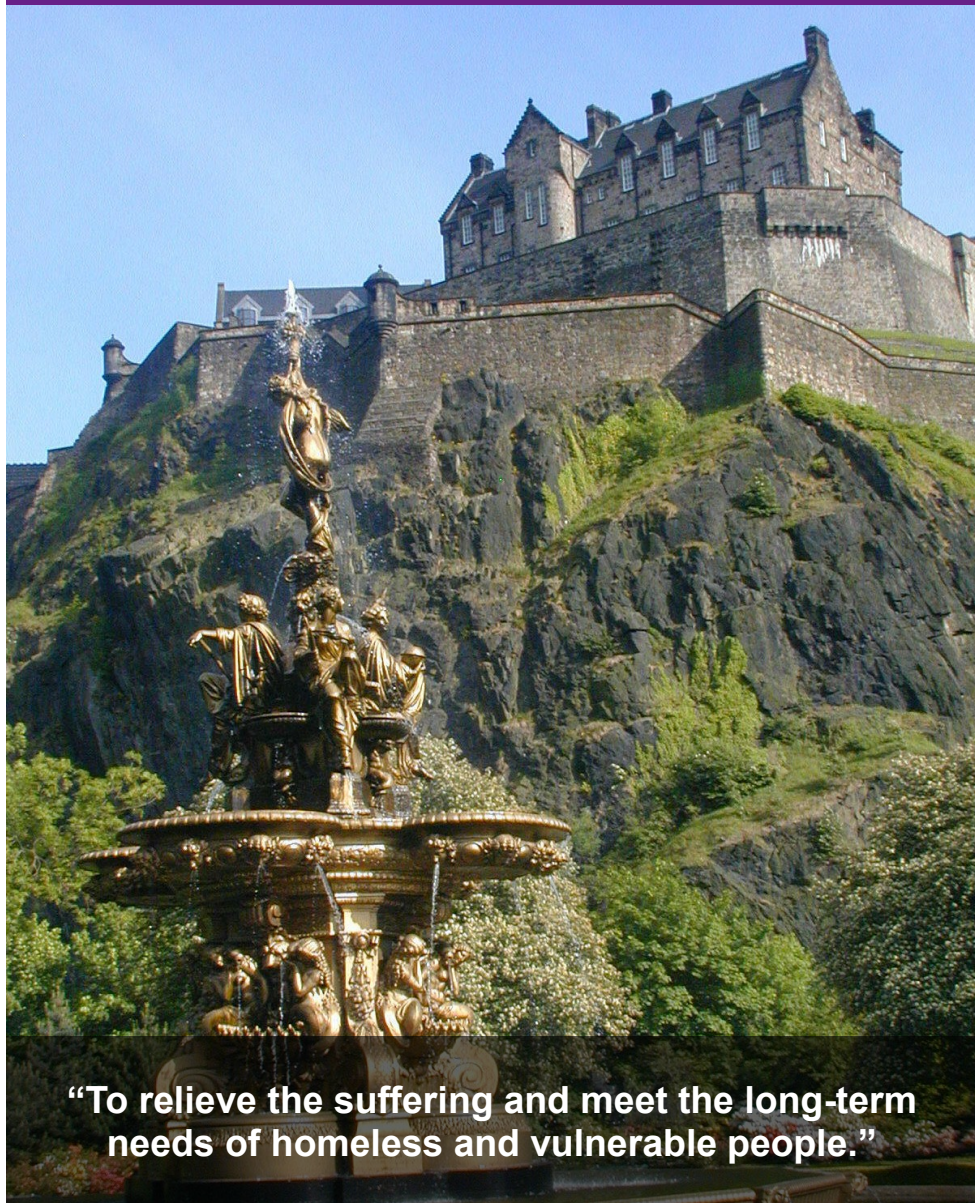


Care Van News

Issue 8 - Summer 2011

The Care Van is jointly managed by Bethany Christian Trust and Edinburgh City Mission



“To relieve the suffering and meet the long-term needs of homeless and vulnerable people.”

The Care Van has been busy as usual and numbers have been higher than expected with almost 80 people being served on one evening. Due to this it is clear there is a great need among the people for the Care Van services and it is also clear we have a committed group of volunteers who turn up regularly to provide the service.

During the springtime David MacLennan, Julie Golding, Paul Drury and I have been visiting the Care Van in the evenings. It has been good to see the volunteer teams who come out regularly to meet the needs presented and some of the challenges presented in providing a year round service to vulnerable people in Edinburgh. The Care Van is needed and valued by many people and through events, and now in print, we want to thank everyone who takes part in the Care Van.

By Tom Gilfillan

Latest News

► **Celebration of Bethany volunteers with 10 years service**

I am delighted to announce that Bethany will be holding a celebration event in October for all volunteers who have been involved in any of our projects or our partner projects, for 10 years or more. This is an opportunity for Bethany to say a huge thank you and to recognise the enormous commitment and dedication of this group of volunteers. We will be having a sit down old fashioned afternoon tea, live music and the presentation of certificates. All Care Van teams have been contacted and asked to provide names of any volunteers who fall into this category. If you have not been approached by your team leader, but know that this event applies to you, please do get in touch with me, Julie Golding, Volunteer Co-ordinator at Bethany, on 0131 561 8965 or by email at juliegolding@bethanychristiantrust.com. We currently have over two hundred names and I am sure that this event will be a joyous celebration and an opportunity to share experiences from the past and look ahead to the future. Invitations will be sent out towards the end of July and I do hope as many of you will attend as possible.

► **Induction**

From the nightly reports a number of instances of aggressive behaviour have been noted and so it was decided that some training would be useful in how to handle aggressive service users, or those under the influence. The next induction session will comprise half induction and half aggression



training and will be held on Wednesday 21st September, 7.30pm at 65 Bonnington Road. We would welcome the input of anyone who has experienced aggression while volunteering with the Care Van—why not come along and share your experiences?

► **Hosting of corporate volunteers**

Occasionally Bethany is approached by Corporate volunteer teams who would like to experience a night on the Care Van. We would not like any team to give up one of their nights, but it would be lovely if teams were willing to host two corporate team members on an occasional basis.



This is an opportunity for Bethany and Edinburgh City Mission to spread the good news about the work that we do and to educate people about homelessness; whilst giving new volunteers some practical experience of working with homeless and vulnerable people and the issues they face.

If your team is willing to act as a host, please do get in touch with me, Julie Golding, Volunteer Co-ordinator at Bethany, on 0131 561 8965 or by email at juliegolding@bethanychristiantrust.com.



► **Driver training**

Investigations are currently underway into training for drivers who feel they lack experience driving a van. This would be open to existing drivers and anyone that would like to become a Care Van driver. To become a Care Van driver you must be over 25, have been driving for at least 2 years and have category D1 on your licence. This training would be an extra for those who feel they would benefit from it. Any contacts or ideas of who could provide this training would be welcomed.

Care Van Issues

► **Flasks**

It has come to our attention that many of you have had problems with the flasks that are in the Care Van. It seems that they are not strong enough to withstand the nightly usage, particularly the handles and pumps which are the parts that break most often. Until such a time as we find a better

alternative, the broken flasks will continue to be replaced. There should always be enough working flasks in the Care Van. Please let us know if this is not the case.

Next Care Van Induction

**Wednesday 21st September
7.30pm**

Bethany Board Room
65 Bonnington Road

to include aggression training

► Waverley Bridge

Thanks to everyone for their patience with the recent problem of where to park on Waverley Bridge. Due to work in Waverley Station the taxis were displaced to Waverley Bridge, leaving no space for the Care Van. In general the taxi drivers were very accommodating

and we are grateful to them for that. Access to the station has now resumed and the Care Van can return to its usual spot.

► Cup Lids

In the nightly reports that are filled out by the team on duty, one thing that is repeatedly mentioned is that more cup lids are needed in the Van. We do not provide lids for the cups. Teams are also reminded that it is their responsibility to provide tea, coffee, milk and sugar as well as cuppa soups and rolls.

► Signposting Booklet

Teams are reminded that in the Van there are copies of a leaflet entitled, "Where can I get help?". Part of the Care Van's remit is to provide help and advice to homeless people. This leaflet contains lots of useful contacts and sources of support, as well as a list of hostels and where to get free food.



Changes in Bethany staff

Georgina Bowyer has now left Bethany to take up a job in Fife and I have taken over responsibility for the Care Van volunteer paperwork. I can be contacted on ruthlongmuir@bethanychristiantrust.com or 0131 561 8910. The work of the Care Van volunteers is tremendous and I hope you all have successful evenings on the Care Van over this summer period. I look forward to working with you in the coming months.

Ruth Longmuir



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