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Churches Group for Social Concern - Aims:

To encourage the people of the churches in the application of their faith to everyday life in the community.
 To draw the attention of member churches to current local needs and work in partnership with other agencies in an attempt to meet them.
 To assist in thinking about ethical and moral issues, by initiating appropriate study projects and conferences.
 When necessary it will arrange fundraising events.

Future plans and events

The next Churches Together in Sevenoaks & District Annual Open Meeting is:
Thursday 13 November '08, 7.30 for 8.00pm at St John's Hill URC

A unique opportunity to hear about the extent of our churches involvement in different ecumenical projects that consistently reach out to the communities and individuals beyond our walls.
 Come, be amazed and inspired.

A Child Contact Centre—Can you help?

A meeting at Vine Evangelical Church in Hitchen Hatch Lane on Monday 29th September at 8.00pm to investigate.

Gifts and Donations

Gifts from churches or individuals to support Befrienders, the Child Contact Centre, the Debt Advice Centre or resource the magazine costs should be made payable to: Sevenoaks Churches Group for Social Concern, and sent to the Treasurer:
 81a Bradbourne Park Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3LQ
 Please indicate the intended purpose of the gift, so that it can be appropriately applied.



Compassion

The Sevenoaks Churches Group for Social Concern Newsletter Issue 13, Sept 2008

Child Contact Centre gets green light

The National Association of Child Contact Centres has approved our application to initiate a Supported Child Contact Centre here in Sevenoaks.
 Following confirmation of the need for such an initiative by the Police, Social Services and District Council, and a visit to a similar endeavour in Orpington at the Methodist Church, we are now looking for volunteers from local churches to get us up and running.
 A meeting is being organised for **Monday evening, 29th September at Vine Evangelical Church at 8.00pm**, to hear about what is involved and to see whether God is calling you into participation.

In essence, these centres exist to enable children, who are the hidden victims of some family breakdowns, to have access to their missing parent, and hence maintain positive relationships.
 With a little training, and the willingness to give a couple of hours on a Sunday afternoon, once every 4 to 6 weeks or so, some of us have the opportunity to demonstrate God's love in practical ways to the victims of family breakdown.
 At present Sally Stiven has offered to co-ordinate this initiative, and the Vine Evangelical Church are offering their premises . . . so all we need are a group of people who would like to help.

There's no counselling, close observation or monitoring involved, just assistance in encouraging families to develop mutual trust, in an impartial, safe, caring environment.
 Hope to see you on 29th September!



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"He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour"
 Luke 4 v 18b-19

Community Interaction



Throughout 2008, Christians from local churches have been getting together to bless our community in practical ways:

As pictures speak louder than words, here are just a few:

a) Making cards for Easter and Mothering Sunday was a great idea to connect with people in Sevenoaks High Street . . . all for free.



b) The Community Action Day—on another rainy May Bank Holiday:



Replacing flooring . . .
Restoring flower beds . . .



Befrienders

In an account entitled "God Knows" Margaret, the co-ordinator describes the reality of "God with us" as she seeks His help in meeting the needs of people referred to the team . . . She writes:

Having visited a potential new 'befriender', I was in a dilemma. Was this an appropriate referral? Should I phone the Volunteer Centre to ask if they give the kind of support requested?

The lady needs help with her mail. She is unable to read or write English. In particular, she needs help with bills, Council Tax etc.

The name of one team member was constantly on my mind, but I vacillated for almost a week, and finally decided that I needed to talk to her to ask her advice.

The latter's response was immediate and amazing. She likes administration and order and had been told shortly before that God would affirm her and confirm her in this kind of outreach.

Dilemma over!! God knows!



Sevenoaks Debt Advice Centre

Wow, isn't it exciting when things come together and begin to bear fruit.

Over the last year, there have been discussions and meetings and follow-up evenings to investigate the level of interest amongst local Christians of offering free debt advice as part of the churches mission to its local community.

This came into focus for us when somebody asked if the churches were considering getting involved in debt advice. As the CAB are the primary providers of debt advice, we asked if they would value help in this arena. They responded that they were not able to meet all the need, had in fact closed their waiting list, and would welcome the churches involvement.

On that basis, we have reached a point today of setting the infrastructure in place to train and equip local Christians to set up a Sevenoaks Debt Advice Centre, based on the model being used by Tonbridge Debt Advice Centre (TDAC), based at Tonbridge Baptist Church.

SDAC will be a division of TDAC, using their tried and tested methods, policies etc. We will train together, sharing resources and where

appropriate, personnel, to offer the same level and standard of debt advice for which they have become renown.

The Sevenoaks initiative will be co-ordinated by Graham Garner, an Elder at Bessels Green Baptist Church, assisted by Cathy Walker, a member of St. Nics and already a trained adviser with the CAB.



The Vine Evangelical Church has offered two rooms that could be configured to conduct interviews.

There are currently 12 people who want to train as advisers and one offering administrative support, from 6 local churches.

It is anticipated that over the next four months, training and on-the-job experience can be offered through TDAC, which could enable the team to start offering debt advice here in Sevenoaks, from quite early in the New Year.

Some finances have already been made available towards start-up costs, but an additional £1000 will be needed. Grants will be applied for, but gifts from individuals or churches will be highly appreciated to contribute towards: training,

software, computers, insurance, telephone, office equipment and supplies.

See overleaf for how to make a contribution.

Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit"

John 15 v 5