

vital link

Transforming lives through disabled people



New Beginnings for Swansea DCF



Wheels for Haiti – Phase 2



Unforgettable Impact



Shine 2011



Dalesdown For Ever!

"Mummy, can we live at Dalesdown for always?" This was a comment from one satisfied nine-year-old on our successful holiday for families with children on the Autistic Spectrum. We followed a familiar programme with a few enhancements to make it even better. Our nine families, with 17 children aged between 2 and 15, were thrilled by the wide range of activities on offer: indoor favourites included some wonderfully messy cooking of Easter nests, inventive creations at the craft table, sessions of dance and drama, bellringing and bubble-blowing. Each day ended with the Act 4 Praise Party where all the children (and adults) were captivated by the mix of singing, action, storytelling and dance. We also enjoyed a lovely musical puppet show by Upbeat Puppets.

This year we found a new spot for our beach picnic, at Lancing, followed by an excellent afternoon at Brooklands Pleasure Park, a welcome discovery which offers brilliant facilities for disabled children. All the families sampled the delights of the Diddlyland Train (some of the children and helpers sampled the train several times...), ball pool, pony rides and playground - where Jenny was persuaded to demonstrate the wheelchair accessible swing!

These family holidays offer something for everyone: for parents it's the chance to relax and let go; for autistic children it provides a full-time carer/'playmate' to join them in whatever activity they choose; for siblings it's a release from the responsibility of looking after (and often apologising for) their autistic brother or sister, and the chance for some fun themselves. But what about the helpers? For three and a half days, they become a part of 'their' family, engaging in all the activities together. They also provide friendship and a listening ear for parents wishing to discuss their concerns. The whole helper team get the opportunity to serve God in serving others, and they do it very well.

After her third visit, one mum summed up why she loves our holidays so much. She said: "I come to Dalesdown because I don't have to think at all, about what to do, what to eat or where to go. I don't even have to worry about my daughter as I know her helper will look after her. I can just let go and relax with the other parents".

Next year's holiday will be from 10-13 April 2012 and places are already being booked up. To register your interest, please email margaret@throughtheroof.org or phone the TTR office.

New Beginnings for Swansea DCF

with Gill Price

Through the roof

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Churches inc

Fellowship DCF

Wheels for the world

integr8

Our Vision

*'... is of a world
where all people live
interdependently,
mutually giving and
receiving as God
intended.'*

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After months of preparation the big day arrived! Swansea DCF met for the first time on Saturday 4th December. The first DCF group in Wales for some time. The meeting was encouraging, with 18 of us attending. We will meet on the first Saturday each month, carrying on through the summer, as many who are disabled come to Swansea on holiday and we can enjoy the fine weather. We are planning a 'Summer Special' include holidaymakers.

We have a theme each month, and in February it was 'New Beginnings.' Appropriate, as it was a new year, and as a new group our membership was growing – 37 people came in March. Our theme for March was 'God's Love' and as we sang wonderful songs, God's amazing love was so strong. I felt quite overwhelmed and a bit tearful at the wonderful way God has brought us together to form our Swansea DCF family.



The group in Swansea

We will be celebrating our birthday on Saturday 3rd December 2011 with a choir and a very large cake! Jenny Edwards will join us, so please come too. We would love to see you! Contact the office if you'd like to find out more, or want to get in touch with Swansea DCF.

Welcome Philippa and Alan!



Philippa Woodcraft,
Youth Ambassador



Alan Whetherly,
Project Manager

TTR is very pleased to welcome two new staff to the team. Alan Whetherly is working as 'Project Manager' with the Integr8 youth programme, and Philippa Woodcraft is our 'Youth Ambassador'. Here are a few words of introduction from Philippa and Alan...

'Hi, I'm Philippa and I was born totally blind. I'm thrilled to have joined Through the Roof in the new role of Youth Ambassador to speak to youth groups, churches, schools and share my personal experience of disability and promote the work of TTR. I'm already out speaking, blogging (at promotingdisability.blogspot.com) and have been interviewed for radio twice. I was baptised at the age of 12 and I'm looking forward to seeing Jesus face-to-face, as He is perfect and will be the first thing I ever see.'

To invite Philippa to share her story to inspire and encourage your church or group, please contact TTR.

'Hello, I am Alan. I've been visually impaired since I was nine, and I live in Crystal Palace, London. Since 2002 I've concentrated on developing leisure and sports for blind and visually impaired people across London and SE England. I'm a passionate sportsman and have represented Great Britain in international blind athletics, completed fourteen marathons and now play visually impaired tennis – I'm the current men's national singles champion.

I've been working on our short-term mission trips to Guatemala and Uganda, and planning for a possible 2012 mission to Moldova. I visited the family holiday and the Christian Resources Exhibition, where I spoke about how churches can play a more inclusive role for disabled people who are visiting London for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. My vision for Integr8 is to ensure that more young disabled people are included in church and community life. I also hope to develop some regional activity programmes.'



Holiday Time in Tenerife

A wave from Tenerife

"Fantastic holiday, well planned, marvellous trips and great fellowship", just one of the quotes from a guest at the end of the DCF holiday to Tenerife this May. After two lovely weeks in the sunshine, new friendships had been formed and a real sense of God having led the holiday from start to finish was felt amongst all the guests and helpers. We recharged our batteries as we met together in our times of fellowship – the whole two weeks was summed up by another guest as 'amazing!'



The view from the platform at the Big Church Day Out

The Big Church Day Out

by Michael Jamison

Over the Saturday and Sunday of the late May bank holiday weekend over 14,000 people gathered in the grounds of Wiston House near Steyning for 'The Big Church Day Out'. The vision of the BCDO is to run an event with something for all ages and tastes and accessible to all. On the main stage were musicians and worship leaders from the UK and abroad, and an inspirational presentation on the work of 'Compassion'. In the tea tent things were a bit more relaxed with The Kings Chamber Orchestra and Stuart Townend being just two of a broad mix of artists.

TTR were there as disability access advisers, giving advice on service provision and ensuring attendees who had a disability were able to participate fully in the event. It was a wide brief, ranging from the provision of volunteer signers on the main stage (who were brilliant) to ensuring the prayer times in the 11th century manor church were accessible.

Seeing people of many backgrounds mixed in with people with learning disabilities, visual impairments and wheelchair users worshipping together in front of the main stage, and not just on the viewing platform, was inspirational and an example for a fully integrated church.

I'd encourage you to go next year, and to visit the Big Church Day Out website (www.bigchurchdayout.com) to get more info and see some pictures.

Wheels for Haiti – Phase 2



Derek and trainees work on a chair

Following a successful recce to Haiti with Wheels co-ordinator, Glenda, Derek Watts returned there with his wife, Pauline, for Phase 2. They report back...

'Our brief for Haiti was to assess the feasibility of establishing a sustainable project in Les Cayes, such as a wheelchair repair centre. On arrival we were met with the news that Dr June, our main contact, had been taken seriously ill and was on a flight to New York! Well Lord, our plan has just been blown out the water so what is Your plan for our time in Haiti? God showed up - While there:

- Derek provided training in wheelchair repair and maintenance for three trainees in preparation for a wheelchair repair centre and carried out an audit of existing stock.
- We had two happy patients at the local hospital. We assessed them for wheelchairs and the trainees selected, adjusted and provided suitable chairs for them – this was a new experience for the trainees.



Derek, Pauline and the new trainees

However, the most exciting development is the potential to provide all-terrain wheelchairs. Standard wheelchairs are fine for relatively flat, smooth surfaces, but the tracks and rough roads in this part of Haiti prove extremely difficult. As an alternative to the usual supply of donated chairs, Wheels are now looking at partnering with another organisation to supply all-terrain wheelchairs. They are supplied flat-packed, then assembled in country. This provides a chair that is more suited to the environment and also offers local employment in assembling them.'

God Provides...Again and Again

by Tim Wood, CEO

Tim (and son, Josh) at the Pressing on Towards the Goal event

At the start of 2011 our sources of old wheelchairs appeared to be closing down but since then God has opened up the way to new and potential suppliers of chairs in fresh areas of the country, and connected Through the Roof to facilities where they can be stored free of charge. Also, thirty specialist 'as-new' buggies were granted to us – these will change the lives of young disabled people overseas this year.

We have also seen God's provision in our finances. Although overall donations are down this year we have been humbled by receiving gifts from supporters who remembered our work in their wills. Even though they have moved on from this world, each legacy means that, as a result of one person's thoughtfulness, the lives of many around the world will be changed for the better.

The response to our last Vital Link mailout also encouraged us and included several new standing orders being set up. This kind of regular giving direct from the donor's bank to our charity is particularly beneficial, as each donation goes further than the equivalent amount sent by cheque because less staff time is spent on administration. It is also a more stable source of income so we can focus more on meeting needs than raising funds, and it assists donors by spreading the cost across the year. If you want to make your money go further, please consider setting up a standing order in two easy steps: **1)** Contact us for a form – either by phone, or by visiting www.throughtheroof.org, then **2)** fill it in and return it to us (you can stop at any time should circumstances change). We don't take any donations for granted and are thankful to God for each and every gift provided, regardless of amount.



From the Chair by Dr. Mike Townsend

In May I spent a couple of days at the Christian Resources Exhibition where Through the Roof was part of the 'Churches for All' zone. The theme was the 2012 Paralympics. I hosted an afternoon chat show with a wheelchair sprinter, a partially sighted runner and a deaf footballer. They were full of energy and enthusiasm! Everyone stressed the need for training and perseverance, and each had a powerful testimony of Jesus in their lives.

In Hebrews 12 we read, 'Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.'

One of the values of TTR is 'Enabling' - We empower and equip all people to enable disabled people to reach their full potential.

We can only reach our full potential with Jesus. What we do smoothes out the path to Him, and enables people to have fulfilled lives in Him.

I used to be a totally blind sprinter running 100 metres in 11 seconds. There were no Paralympics then. I did not persevere. Don't ask me what my time would be now!

My goal now is Jesus.

My guests' goal is Jesus.

Is your goal Jesus?

Dear Through the Roof Friends...

by **Joni Eareckson Tada**

So much has happened since Tim Wood took up the reins at Through the Roof! And maybe you've sensed it – fresh energy and ideas, a new on-line shop to expand resources for churches, a new TTR Retreat day that's accessible to all, new potential destinations for Integr8 mission trips, new Christian partners to work with to build the kingdom of Christ, and a fresh excitement about the future.

And you are helping to make that future happen. It's why I am so grateful for your prayers and support for Through the Roof. Disabled people and their families are the least-reached when it comes to hearing the Gospel – and Tim and the team are fully committed to change that! We want to make Jesus real to the people who need Him most, in the UK and around the world.

So thank you for being generous and willing to share. In fact, 1 Timothy 6:18-19 says, *"Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."* Thank you for partnering with us as we help disabled people take hold of the life that is truly life!



Jen on the swing on the family holiday

Jesus the Carer

by **Jenny Edwards**

As I write, the Disabled Christians Fellowship holiday programme is in full swing, the first holiday to Tenerife having taken place, and preparations well underway for Babbacombe. On all these holidays we are very reliant on the Lord to provide carers for us to enable the holiday to be a success for all the guests. The carers are very special people, full of love, compassion and endless patience, a model of how the Lord would have us all be, whether it be to those with a disability or just to a difficult neighbour.

I am often reminded of the story in Mark's Gospel ch:8 v 22 where

Jesus, in His love for a blind man, 'took him by the hand' to a place where in the stillness and peace of His presence, He renewed the man's sight. Jesus took the blind man outside the village, away from prying eyes and people who might mock or question what is happening, so that He could spend time alone with this man and give him the new life he needed. What an amazing carer Jesus was and is still today! He instils in the hearts of many the amazing qualities required to give the guests the best holiday ever. Thank you to everyone who shares such gifts on all Disabled Christians Fellowship holidays.



Team member Shirley with a happy recipient in Uganda this year

The Unforgettable Impact of TTR

After our first venture into Uganda in 2010 we received feedback from our partners on the unforgettable impact we made there. Another Wheels team returned recently and Integr8 will visit again in the summer. Fred Hangujja, the founder of Response Initiative for Learning Disabilities (RILD) wrote to us about the impact of these visits.

‘On behalf of RILD and the people of Uganda, I want to extend feelings of gratitude, appreciation, prayers and best wishes to you for the ministry of Through the Roof through both teams of Integr8 and Wheels for the World that visited Uganda last year. The impact made on the community, the local leaders and professionals was great and unforgettable.

RILD has grown as a result of our partnership with TTR and is now well known and respected

in Kira. Through the ministry of Wheels for the World, beliefs are changing, disabled people in the region are more independent and the love of God is witnessed more practically.

Through the ministry of Integr8, we managed to win over many professionals and parents, 220 in total. Disability and development is now taken more seriously, at least in Kira, which is very positive.

On behalf of all the disabled people and their families, the professionals (Teachers, Pastors, Doctors etc), on behalf of the community of Kira Town Council and Uganda, on behalf of RILD staff THANK YOU for bringing smiles and hopes to so many people’s faces. THANK YOU for unselfishly giving, even giving your own selves that you considered to travel to Uganda to bless others, MAY GOD BLESS YOU.’



Pressing on Towards the Goal... of Transformation

There was a good sense of unity and togetherness as supporters from across our DCF, Wheels, Integr8 and Churches inc programmes met together recently. The event, named ‘Pressing on Towards the Goal’, offered the opportunity to celebrate the work of Through the Roof in all its aspects, meet new staff and plan for the future. New Youth Ambassador, Philippa, moved many when she testified of how God had been glorified through her, despite

being blind from birth; and staff and volunteers listened to one another about ideas for the days ahead. People were consulted over plans for a new strapline for the charity, with feedback helping to shape the choice of...**“Transforming lives through disabled people.”** Tim Wood, Charity Chief Executive, said, ‘I believe it is a positive phrase that encapsulates why the charity exists and, with God’s help, gives our work a cohesive identity for the future’.

Team NI

Our CEO, Tim, will be visiting Northern Ireland in the autumn (after his wife has given birth to baby number 5!) for a much overdue visit to encourage and share with existing and potential supporters, volunteers, and partners there.

Tim said, “I’m very much looking forward to visiting John, Carol and the team. Any encouragement I bring is tiny

compared to the sacrifice in time, energy and money that our small but committed team of volunteers give. I am keen to listen to their ideas for the work, forge better communication links and support those involved.”

If you’re interested in the work and would like to connect up with others during Tim’s visit, please contact us on ni@throughtheroof.org or tel: **028 9094 7910**



A Great New Shop

Through the Roof is pleased to announce a revamp of our online store. The shop, which can be found at www.throughtheroof.org (follow the link over on the right) was recently redesigned by Access by Design to excellent accessibility standards. It’ll continue to offer TTR’s range of resources for churches, communities, youth groups and others. We’ll be adding new products over the coming months, so please keep checking back. Have a look and tell us what you think!

Just Cards Direct



Help provide justice, dignity and hope for disadvantaged people and raise funds for TTR at the same time!

Just Cards Direct sell beautiful cards for all occasions, at reasonable prices, some with Bible verses. Many of the cards are made by community projects in Africa. Often these projects provide the only income to a widow or an orphan, helping to provide self-worth and security.

Just Cards Direct practises fair-trade principles and aims to bring hope to those who have been down-trodden, neglected and traumatised. They give away over 25% of their profits to Christian charities and Through the Roof will receive 10% of any card sales from our supporters.

Purchases may be made online at www.justcardsdirect.com - please remember to select Through the Roof from the charity list!

Thank you, Freeman's

by **Karen Goodridge**, Volunteer Community Fundraiser

Pupils and staff at City of London Freeman's Junior School, Asstead chose Wheels for the World as their designated charity this year. The pupils worked hard, with cake and sweet sales, did a sponsored read for two weeks and held two talent shows and other concerts.

The Junior talent shows featured solo singing performances, dances, comedy sketches and even an impersonation of teachers in the staff room during a 'snow closure' day. Trophies were awarded for different performances, and the Upper Junior Show raised around £1000 for Wheels.

The sponsored read raised £6,613.88, with £5,785 being eligible for gift-aid, meaning we're able to claim an extra 25%. Altogether they raised over £11,500. All of us at TTR and Wheels would like to thank everyone at Freeman's for all this amazing work. Wheels co-ordinator, Glenda will be visiting the school soon to say thank you in person.



Some of the Fundraisers at Freeman's
Back row (l to r) - Grace Bowling, Olivia Yang and Alicia Wilson and front row (l to r) Stephanie Elstub, Emily Yang and Emily Elstub

Donations

Thank you for all of your donations and support. The work of Through the Roof would be impossible without your generosity and contributions. We aim to respond to every gift, but often receive anonymous gifts, or gifts without a return address, and respond to them here: Thank you... anonymous donation for WFTW(Uganda) of £100; a donation for Wheels from M Bennett; the regular donation from P Glover; £147.26 via Stewardship Services from O Olakanpo; £50 via CAF voucher for Wheels from Ian and Rosamund Robertson; £40 via CAF voucher for Wheels from Jennifer Seeley and £25 via Charity Choice from E P Hucket.

Start of the Road in Leicester

'The Store Room' in Leicester have very generously offered TTR the use of a unit to store wheelchairs prior to refurbishment. We are very grateful for this, as we're now able to collect chairs from a previously less accessible area. The donation and refurbishment of old wheelchairs is the start of the road which ends in a person receiving a wheelchair and having their lives transformed. If you have an unused wheelchair and can get it to The Store Room in Foxholes Road, Leicester (LE3 1TH, **0800 158 5333**) you can be assured it will get to a good home.

Shine 2011

by Sarah Kidd



Photos from top to bottom:
Shine underground,
Shine Group,
Indoor climbing

I felt very blessed to go to 'Shine' over Easter. It took me on an incredible journey. My faith strengthened and I was inspired to learn more and to grow closer to Jesus. I've been unwell for six years, since I was fourteen. I'm unable to stand or walk and I use a wheelchair. It's only recently that I've come to know God and I feel his presence in my life more than ever before.

This inclusive holiday, based at Bendrigg Trust in Cumbria, was run by Scripture Union and Through the Roof. The centre lies in the beautiful surroundings between the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales. Everybody came together regardless of ability and helped one another, united with the belief that everyone has as much to give.

The holiday was themed round the Easter story of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, and the group shared worship, prayer and Bible study. We were encouraged to reflect, and form small discussion groups. I found it difficult to know what to write – despite having moved forward in my journey of faith, I felt quite lost, everyone else seemed to know their direction. Until the message was shared that 'Jesus will meet you right where you're at' – from then on I began to see things differently. I really gained a valuable understanding of my own thoughts and feelings.

We took part in activities especially adapted for those with disabilities. Despite being unable to walk I enjoyed climbing, abseiling, the zip-wire, archery, canoeing and caving. We had a campfire where we drank hot chocolate and toasted marshmallows. One of my favourite activities was the zip-wire. It's hard to describe the feeling of being lifted from my wheelchair and hanging from a rope, before flying through the air! It's remarkable all the things that can be achieved with God.

Towards the end we focussed on continuing to grow closer to Jesus. I'm overwhelmed when I look over the last eight months of my faith journey. My illness often leaves me feeling weak, but going to Church gives me a different kind of energy. It fills me with hope and positivity. Words can't describe how it has begun to transform my life. Please contact us for details of the 2012 holiday.

TTR in Budapest

Tim, Philippa and
Abigail in Budapest

The European Disability
Network delegates
(bottom)

Tim Wood had the privilege of travelling to Budapest recently for the European Disability Network Conference, where in 1994 Joni Eareckson-Tada inspired the founding of Through the Roof. Tim met partners in disability ministry from across Europe, as part of the 400-delegate Hope for Europe event. Through the Roof is fortunate in having significant resources compared to partners in Ukraine or Bulgaria, for example, so it was our honour to be able to pass on ideas and encourage them in some small way. Youth Ambassador, Philippa Woodcraft and buddy support, Abigail, also attended and inspired others to consider the inclusion of young disabled people. Tim facilitated a session to raise awareness of disability with other networks, and identified potential future partners for Wheels and Integr8. He lead sessions on Parachute Bible stories and Action Planning for the 30 EDN delegates, as well as hosting the final evening of shared, inclusive worship and communion.

