

vital link

Transforming lives through disabled people



New Parachute Stories



Mad Hair Fundraising



Paralympics



Sharon's Birthday



Blue Skies at Worthing!

by **Margaret Bale**

Wednesday was Beach Day on our holiday for families with autistic children. So, picnics made, we headed off to Worthing. Then the heavens opened and as the hail stones battered our car I had a hesitant phone call from one of the mums: "Should we turn back?" "Of course not," I said with confidence, "there will be blue skies at Worthing!"

I had no Plan B for a wet picnic and so it was "over to you, Lord". We arrived at Worthing to find the roads were dry, and there were indeed bits of blue sky. We didn't need the factor 30 sun cream, but we managed to sit on the beach in the dry, watching the black cloud which never quite let go, and later (briefly) became a genuine sunny afternoon at the park where we had a lot of fun. Anyone living in Britain during April this year will not be surprised to learn that for the first time in its 7-year history, our holiday at Dalesdown for families with autistic children did not enjoy brilliant sunshine. And yet, somehow it felt as if the Lord had our programme in front of Him and was pausing the rain whenever we needed it to be dry!

Back at Dalesdown I met Richard, the manager, and told him what had happened. He grinned and replied that during the staff's morning prayers, the cleaner had prayed specifically that the rain would stop when we arrived at the beach! And so it was throughout the holiday. All the outside activities were dry and the nine families enjoyed everything on offer, including the new addition of Dalesdown's Sports Hall. As usual the feedback was rewarding: "this holiday was truly wonderful... the programme had such a perfect flow... our one-to-one helper was absolutely brilliant, and knowing he was able to cope with my challenging child was what made the holiday for me".

Nobody wanted to leave at the end, and several families agreed to meet afterwards. The team of 20 helpers was thanked for everything, but in the end it is God's blessing that makes these few days such a special time. If you would like to come next year (as a guest or a helper) the dates are 2 – 5 April 2013 - please get in touch!

Parachute Book Brings Bible Stories to Life

Through the roof

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integr8

Our Vision

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

Through the Roof Charitable Trust Ltd is a UK Registered Company number 04201510 with offices at SeeAbility House, 1A Hook Road, Epsom, KT19 8TH. It is also a Registered Charity Number 1087788.

Vital Link is designed and printed by PDC Copyprint (Kingston) www.pdc-kingston.co.uk

Parachute Bible Stories is a new book from Through the Roof, written to empower children's workers, teachers and parents to teach Bible truths to all ages and abilities in fun and memorable ways.

Designed to be used with a children's 'play parachute,' the book contains activities to allow young people to see, hear and experience Bible stories interactively. It provides twenty Bible stories in clear, understandable language closely following the original Bible text. Each story incorporates directions of how to use the parachute to physically demonstrate the text and supplementary notes offer inclusive principles to ensure children with physical/learning/sensory disabilities can all be included.

CEO, Tim Wood, said, "A play parachute is a simple, colourful resource loved by children all over the world. This book enables you to use a parachute for profound purposes and involve young people of all abilities to act out Bible

In the Zone at CRE



Michael tries out the hand-cycle at CRE

Through the Roof had a stand at this year's Christian Resources Exhibition. For the third year, we ran a booth in the shared 'Churches for All Zone' with a number of other organisations - all friends and collaborators - sharing expertise and working together.

As in all of these events you end up talking to a real mix of people. Some are just being polite, and then there are others for whom you were just the right people to talk to. Out of it has come a new source for used wheelchairs, a number of speaking opportunities, possible team members and a number of sales of literature and resources.

Sarah Smith, a volunteer on the stand, said, 'It is brilliant to see God's hand at work (it's all about Him!). I helped on two mornings, one with Philippa and the other with Alan. It was amazing



Crossing the Red Sea, Parachute story style

stories together". Integr8 teams have used the stories with great success on our mission trips and at other events.

You can try a sample on the Integr8 website at youth.throughtheroof.org - the book is available now for £5 - visit our website or call the office.

to see so many people come to the stand and be able to talk to the right person.'

Alan said, 'It was great to be part of the team. This year the zone was centred on the Paralympics and churches being more inclusive and welcoming to disabled people. One of the visitors to our stand was keen to tell me about plans for the Paralympic sports taster session they're running in September. They needed someone who knew how to coach the sports, particularly Boccia. You can imagine their surprise and joy when I told them I'm a sports coach and would be delighted to help at the event! I even had a Boccia set (left there for me to take home) at the back of our exhibition stand to demonstrate the game. God encouraged me to talk to them about our Integr8 Encounter Group pilot project and I was pleased that they thought that their Church would like to be part of the scheme. We smiled and praised God for his perfect timing!'

Welcome Nigel!

Through the Roof is delighted to welcome Nigel Drury to the new role of International Missions Manager. He's been a missionary in Africa for 22 years with an excellent track record of developing sustainable projects that empower local people. Please pray for him and check the next Vital Link to learn more about him.



Simon from Flowstore halfway through his charity haircut

Two Weeks for TTR is Nearly Here...

Between 14th and 28th August TTR supporters around the UK will be raising awareness of our work and running fundraising activities. Events we've heard about so far include a pub quiz, furniture sale, a garden party, two coffee mornings and two DVD evenings! We'll also be having a coin collection in Epsom's Ashley Centre on August 22nd, along with a few games of boccia (a Paralympic sport).

Don't worry if you haven't planned anything yet – it's not too late! We're really keen for as many people as possible to take part, and there's a fundraising pack on our website with practical information and ideas to inspire you. Visit www.throughtheroof.org/fundraising to find that.

Simon from Flowstore has even shaved his head to raise money for Wheels! You might not want to go quite that far, but we'd love to hear about anything you do.



Simon's new look!



Fundraising in action at the Ashted Village Day

Groups Get Together

Following last year's team day at Epsom, where Youth Ambassador Phillippa Woodcraft gave her testimony, 12 members of DCF Forest Hill met together with near-neighbours Sidcup to hear her speak again, purchase copies of Philippa's CD and to find out a little more about

each other and how the different groups operate. A good time was had by all and Forest Hill issued an open invitation for a return visit. Lots of groups are pairing (and trio-ing) up to share skills and make friends. To find out more, contact Jenny at the office.



Mad Hair Day at Rosebery

Ruby House at Rosebery school in Epsom, chose Wheels for the World to benefit from their fundraising week in June. Gemma Goodridge, from year 8, told her tutor group how she had been involved with the work over the past few years, helping out at Summer Fairs and Christmas events.

The school has a strong tradition of raising money for local charities. Eileen and Karen were delighted to be asked to represent Through the Roof at an assembly earlier in the year and gave a short presentation sharing how, in partnering with TTR, their money would be used to change the lives of disabled people.

Ruby House charity week was filled with lunchtimes of frenetic activity as the girls came up with different ways to raise funds. The school

Doughnuts, Chocolate and Mad Hair

Rosebery School Fundraisers

raised an amazing £363.62 for Wheels for the World. Well done girls!

"Ruby House is a 'giving' House," says Mrs Evans, Head of Ruby House. "Our students take fundraising seriously. Each tutor group has selected a charity of their choice and following the visit from Eileen and Karen, our Student Council agreed that it would be brilliant to have a whole House charity as well. We are starting our fundraising for Wheels for the World with this charity week, including a Krispy Kreme sale, chocolate fountain and a 'mad hair day' but plan future events so that each tutor group raises the funds to sponsor a wheelchair. The students were impressed by the enterprising idea of reconditioning wheelchairs and sending them to folk overseas. We look forward to our partnership with Through the Roof."



Folicle Fundraisers



Dear Roof-Breaking Friends...

From **Joni Eareckson Tada**

With the London Olympics and Paralympics upon us, the team at Through the Roof is encouraging churches to demonstrate the love of Jesus to their disabled neighbours and those who will be coming from around the world to compete. After all, 1 Corinthians 9:25 says, 'Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.'

Through the Roof wants to remind everyone to go for the "crown that will last forever." The TTR team has launched a new resource called 'Lasting Values' – it's written in partnership with the Salvation Army to help church youth groups and schools explore the four values of the Paralympic Games. Also, we've had a chance to tell more friends in the UK about the purpose of the Paralympic Games and how to be more 'welcoming' to those with disabilities.

But whether it's the Paralympics or any of the other fine programmes here at Through the Roof, we want everyone to reach for that crown that will last forever – and, of course, it only comes through a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. So please be praying for our summer outreach as we fan the flames of Christ's love among many more families affected by disability in the UK and beyond.

Please know that as you pray for and support Through the Roof, you, too, are striving for a glorious reward – I pray "you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away" (1 Peter 5:4). Thank you for helping Through the Roof share God's love with those who need Him most – and most often, that's disabled people and their families. Bless you as you do!



Notes From the Chair

by **Mike Townsend**

Since the last Vital Link, I have been all over the world! In Vietnam, I went to a 'secret' church in Hanoi. Access was only for those who knew about it. But for disabled people, Vietnam is a challenge. 6 million scooters choke the roads and you take your life in your hands crossing. Steps are everywhere with no ramps. They weren't going to let me visit the Vietcong tunnels as I couldn't see the leading lamp! "Who cares about lamps?" I said and lead the way through. Everyone followed.

Romania, too, is a nightmare for access. Holes in pavements and roads with steps that stop abruptly by great drops! 6-storey flats with no lifts.

In South Africa we were kept inside a guarded compound. Our taxi driver had lost three cars to car-jacking, and been kidnapped once. Johannesburg was the only area where I felt 'disabled'. But, I got privileges! I held a baby lion, and climbed to hand-feed a giraffe.

Some travels nearer home took me to Gateshead and Barnsley for the 'Get Set Tour' presenting the openings for mission in the Paralympics. We have a tremendous opportunity to show the abilities of disabled people, and challenge attitudes to access to Christian life for us.

Through The Roof is all about enabling access – to God and to life. In Britain, we may feel excluded. But talking to disabled people around the world has made me thankful for our 'enabling' country. But greater than that, we have an 'enabling' God. Hebrews 16 says, 'Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need'.

Mike smiling as he escapes the Vietcong tunnels

Stef Reid – Christian Paralympian

Stef Reid competing for the UK

Stef Reid was a promising rugby player until a boating accident caused the amputation of her right leg just below the knee. "I was really thankful to be alive. It was a complete miracle that I survived the accident. But with my love for sport, I was absolutely devastated at the prospect."

When she heard about Paralympic sport, she was cynical: "To me, Paralympic sport was very Mickey Mouse, not very competitive, just fun and games and I wasn't really interested. I remember setting out for my first track meet and winning by a mile and thinking it was a bit silly". When she was well beaten in an international race, she realized that she needed to start training.

Going to the 2008 Paralympics and competing in front of 80,000 blew her away. Paralympic sports were for real. She was proud to come away with a medal in the 200 metres T44 class (amputees). Two years later she set a new world long-jump record in her class.

Stef went to a Christian school and knew about God. But the accident changed her perspective: "I remember lying in the ambulance. I was scared because I knew in my heart that I did not know God. I remember praying for a second chance. I committed my life to him in the ambulance. I've certainly had moments of frustration but never anger towards God. I still know that God is in control and if he could save me from an accident like that, there is not much else that he cannot handle."

Stef Reid is seeking selection for the Paralympics in sprints and long jump. (Information has been provided by teaming up with our friends at Verite Sport who promote a Christian presence in sport based on the teachings of the Bible – please join us in praying for all Christian Paralympians. We have a few other profiles on our website).



Profiling the Paralympics

The Paralympic Games will demonstrate disabled people as equals – athletes in their own right; each one exercising their God-given gifts, being welcomed, enabled to participate in accessible facilities and expounding the Paralympics motto – 'Spirit in Motion'.

Through the Roof has partnered with other Christian agencies to produce resources to assist churches to make the most of this unique opportunity, and demonstrate God's Spirit in Motion:

Lasting Values is a free resource that equips youth leaders and teachers to explore the values of the Paralympics from a Christian perspective using video, sports, craft and multi-sensory experiences. Written by Through the Roof in partnership with ALOVE (the youth division of the Salvation Army) you can download this resources for free by visiting www.throughtheroof.org/2012-games or www.salvationarmy.org.uk/alone



Undeclared is a DVD dedicated to celebrating the faith of Paralympians, campaigning for justice, and promoting greater inclusion in church. It offers content for Sunday services during the Paralympics featuring videos with Paralympians, a sermon outline, prayers, all-age activities and a quiz. Produced by BMS World Mission in collaboration with other Christian agencies, including Through the Roof, you can order it for £6 from us or www.bmsworldmission.org/undefeated

Disability Sunday is promoted by the Churches for All (CFA) network to take place on 2nd or 9th September to utilise the profile of the Paralympics. A comprehensive information pack is available for churches offering templates, checklists, sermon outline, children's activities etc. Download it free from www.throughtheroof.org or CFA website (www.churchesforall.org.uk). Please get in touch if you don't have internet access, but would like to order any of these resources.

Paralympic Goalball
(Image provided by Verite)



Festival of Inclusion

On the Paralympics opening night an inclusive community festival will be held at Stoke Mandeville stadium – birthplace of the Paralympics.

Through the Roof are working with Fusion Youth and Community, More Than Gold and Aylesbury's Church network to equip local

Christians to run this free, disability-friendly, community festival for 5000. Chair of the event, Revd Martin Kuhrt said: "We want to model inclusion and see the community working together to celebrate everyone's gifts and talents. We hope to help create a legacy of disability ministry." It will be exciting to see Christian inclusivity in action, and we hope it becomes a model for churches elsewhere to adopt.

There'll be collective activities, disability sports, arts, multi-sensory experiences, puppets and chill-out zones. The opening ceremony will be shown via Channel 4, and free food provided with church volunteers and disabled people running activities.

I Shall See Him Face To Face



Philippa's CD, 'I Shall See Him Face to Face'

Our Youth Ambassador, Philippa has recorded herself for a CD of twelve hymns to sell to raise money for TTR. The discs are priced at £6, £4 of which goes to TTR (with £2 to cover costs). Hymns include: My Jesus My Saviour, Lord I Lift Your Name on High, and No One Ever Cared For Me Like Jesus. It's entitled 'I Shall See Him Face to Face'. Philippa says "This is my first CD and I hope you will enjoy it. It is available online at www.throughtheroof.org/shop or from the TTR office."

New Book to Enable Churches

Jeff Lucas launches 'Enabling Church'



Well-known Christian writer and speaker, Jeff Lucas, gave his support to a new book, 'Enabling Church', which encourages a fresh look at the Biblical view of disability.

Jeff said the book was ideal for churches who wanted to be more inclusive. Having recently torn a leg muscle, Jeff spent time using a wheelchair and on crutches. 'I suddenly realised the indignity that disabled people experience,' he said, describing how people talked over him rather than to him. 'How tragic when it happens in the life of the Church.'

Written by Dr Gordon Temple, CEO of Torch Trust, with his colleague Lin Ball, the material is ideal for small group use over seven sessions, with Bible study questions, prayer and worship suggestions, and interviews with disabled people. It is available from our on-line shop, while Torch Trust offers braille, large print and audio editions at www.torchtrust.org or **01858 438260**.

Getting the Word Out

by **Alan Whetherly**,
Integr8 Project Manager

I have had a busy time lately speaking and sharing my testimony – particularly talking about sport, my faith and disability. I recently did an interview for Channel 4 on the 4thought TV slot which should appear during the Olympics or the Paralympics so do watch out for that! I hope and pray that it helps and encourages people.

Speaking to Christian Youth Workers is also so important to the Integr8 project as we can get the message of a spirit of inclusion over, and talk about the wonderful opportunity the Paralympics gives us to open up our churches to disabled people.

Moving Day

by Jenny Edwards



Well, today has been quite a day. Strange people turning up at my home wanting to be able to squeeze various bits of furniture into the smallest of spaces, even an open-topped sports car took two items! It was sad seeing furniture that had belonged to my parents leaving, but I hope the new owners will appreciate these things just as much as I have. Now at the end of the day, with all items gone to their new homes, I am very aware of two things. One, how helpful, kind and considerate all the builders were as they hefted furniture and squeezed it into ridiculously small spaces simply to help me out! The second thought was the old saying 'you can't take things with you'.

I realised that even though it has been emotional at times, all the articles that have gone from my home can and will be replaced. I wonder how many of us gather up treasures of 'much loved furniture', and yet fail to gather those treasures of Christ? The love, kindness and thoughtfulness of those builders again put all this in perspective for me.

I have the most costly of all treasures in my life, it can never be sold or even given away, it is mine and I know that my Saviour will always be there for me. I wonder how precious that love of Christ is to you today?

Elevation at Ellel

by John Berry, Ellel Ministries

When Ellel Ministries, an International healing and discipleship charity, established Glyndley Manor in 1991, it was clear that guests with mobility disabilities would find it extremely difficult to access the first floor Conference Room. In the past such guests had to be physically man-handled up the stairs, but obviously this isn't acceptable.

We realised that we needed a lift, and considered options regarding location, disruption to existing functions of the building, and cost. Being a charity, money has always been in short supply, and the project was not put on the urgent list until recently.

After several years of praying, planning and applying for necessary permissions, work started last autumn. We needed to construct an addition to the existing building to house the platform lift and two accessible toilets. Funds were minimal when work commenced, but as we reached each stage of construction, the finance arrived - often in amazing ways. On one occasion, we received a gift from a donor in America, responding to a devotional article online. Another time a substantial donation was made as a result of a conversation held in a coffee shop. Recently an urgent bill needed paying and a donation for the exact amount arrived on the final day. When we began building we had £7000 in the fund. Now the work is nearly completed, we have spent over £85000 which has come directly from the Lord via our supporters. We're thrilled by all those who share our vision, providing access for those who need healing to get to our conference room, hear teaching on healing and receive prayer.

In the last few weeks we have had opportunities to use the lift although the work isn't complete. One gentleman suffered a slight stroke whilst here but was able to return to the Centre

from hospital and continue the course because the lift was available. Another guest was able to attend despite having her leg in plaster after a recent accident.

Our prayer is that having provided the way for guests with disabilities to get up to the first floor, they can receive ministry, bringing wholeness through God's Word and Spirit as they attend our courses. (www.ellelministries.org/uk)



Before



After



Meike explains the adjustable chair

Sharon with the classroom chair

Sharon needed a chair with some major adjustments

Sharon's Birthday

Kimilili March 2012

The Wheels team gave out over 150 mobility aids during an exceptional distribution in Kimilili in March. Meike Curry writes about a very special recipient...

Towards the end of the distribution, a few of us were able to take a specially adapted chair out to meet Mildred and two of her children: Sharon and Roy-Elijah. We had met them at the beginning of the week but had to make major adaptations to the chair for Sharon. When we arrived we found out it was Sharon's ninth Birthday! She had contracted TB Spine as a child and was left physically severely disabled following a relapse. Her little brother Roy-Elijah had cerebral Malaria when he was little, again leaving him severely disabled. Their dad had left, so Mildred and her children lived with her brother and family. We were able to give

Sharon a very supportive chair that tilts and a classroom chair with a tray so she can practise writing and take part in school as much as possible. We gave Roy-Elijah a buggy to help his posture and transport. We had met this family at the district office of the mission and gave them all a lift home with some of the equipment on the roof of our Land Rover. We were amazed at how far out they lived, and that she had travelled with her two children by motorbike, with her brother in front and Sharon and Roy-Elijah squeezed between them for an hour to meet us! What a joy to leave these chairs with the family.

A few weeks later, we heard from contacts in Kimilili to say that, "Roy and Sharon are doing well – Sharon has been to school every day! She is now able to sit up in class and can see the board etc. She did her exams, coming 2nd in the whole year. The family say the Wheels team have transformed the lives of their children! Thank you.

Colston's Story

Five years have passed since I was depressed and thought I had no prospects in life. After being bullied in school, I was put in touch with a man called Brian. He was sent to mentor me and help me gain confidence and self-esteem. He helped me find the career I wanted and to go back to school, finish my GCSEs and get to college. I studied Health and Social Care and passed the course.

I then got in touch with the amazing volunteers of DCF, who take disabled people on holiday! I was more than happy to help and have found myself supporting people on trips to Tenerife and Blackpool. This year's destination was Majorca in May. If you would like to volunteer or go on one of those holidays yourself, just contact Jenny at DCF for details.

I am now settled in a new job in the care sector and I really love it there. I want to thank everyone who has supported me.



Holidaygoers and helpers on the DCF Majorca holiday

Donations

We aim to thank every donor for their generous gift, but sometimes it's not possible to contact people, due to anonymous giving or lack of return address. We're extremely grateful for all of your contributions and support. Thank you all!