

20 Years of Changing Lives



Through the **roo**

TTR is 20!



All Aboard



Water Team



Defending the Fatherless



Happy Birthday! Through the Roof has been celebrating throughout 2017, and the peak was our gathering at St. George's, Ashtead. Nearly 200 supporters of all ages and abilities joined together to give thanks to God for 20 years of the charity with a fully inclusive worship service.

Many attendees said the service had inspired them, and committed to head home and do more. Christine, a faithful volunteer over many years, told us, "I found it thrilling to be part of one of the most diverse church services I've been to. The service content was truly inspiring and I want to do more to support TTR."

Leading the service were people with physical and sensory disabilities and parents of disabled children, and the centre-piece of the event was a life-size balloon structure depicting the through the roof story. Created by 'Inspired Balloons', it captured everyone's imagination and featured in many photos on Facebook!

The order of service was available in large print and braille, and speech was signed into BSL by interpreters, all with the goal of welcoming as many people as possible. One Mum of a disabled person enthused, "My daughter really enjoyed it and felt at home because there were so many other people in wheelchairs."

Pastor Davis, our partner in Kenya, sent his congratulations, "The charity has done an

Thank you for partnering with me in Kenya and making disabilities known and treated with dignity. Your staff and volunteers have always shown love, kindness and le. CONGRATULATIONS

immensely great job in transforming the lives of many people

with disabilities and

developing nations.

families

in

their

patience to my people. CONGRATULATIONS AND GOD BLESS ALL."

The service was truly inspiring and I want to do more

Joni Eareckson-Tada recalled the small beginnings of Through the Roof in an affirming video message, and gave praise to God for everything that's been achieved since those days. Jenny Edwards MBE read the 'through the roof story' in Mark chapter 2 from the Accessible Bible, and worship leader Thuy Mallalieu, who is himself blind, sensitively led the congregation in a time of praise and singing. Rev Jonathan Edwards preached, describing the love and determination of the men in bringing their paralysed friend to Jesus, and that one of them must have taken the lead in this enterprise. He challenged us to find 1000 Roofbreakers in 3 years, to enable disabled people to come to Jesus and be active participants in the life of the church - a big task!

We currently have over 110 Roofbreakers, who have all received a free starter kit, encouraging monthly email and are part of a growing network. Could you join this family and advocate for disabled people in your church? Please contact us or sign up at www.throughtheroof.org.

Dear Roof Breaking Friends...

By Joni Eareckson Tada



Contact Details

PO Box 353, EPSOM, KT18 5WS

Phone: 01372 749955

Email: info@throughtheroof.org Web:

www.throughtheroof.org







Our Vision

... is all people enjoying life together, mutually giving and receiving, as God intended'

Our Mission

'... is transforming lives through Jesus with disabled people'

Through the Roof Charitable Trust Ltd is a UK Registered Company number 04201510 with offices at Suite B1, Aviary Court, 138 Miles Road, Epsom, KT19 9AB. It is also a Registered Charity Number 1087788.

Quotes are sometimes edited for clarity and length

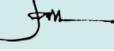
Vital Link is designed and printed by PDC Design & Print www.pdc-kingston.co.uk No one happily arrives at a 20th Anniversary by themselves – a journey that long and well-lived takes many friends who pray diligently, serve gladly, give generously, volunteer gladly, and work hard. It's how I feel about you – God bless you for the many ways you have come alongside Through the Roof to minister to people with disabilities and their families, here in the UK and abroad.

And the next two decades of outreach promise to be just as fruitful. I am so excited that soon, Through the Roof will distribute their 10,000th wheelchair in Africa – just think of the many thousands of people that have been reached for Christ through each chair! And I'm so excited about the upcoming launch of Through the Roof's new website. It will mean that our communication with you will be so much more accessible – together,



we are designing new ways to take the ministry into the next 20 years efficiently and effectively for the kingdom of Christ.

So, thank you for celebrating this special anniversary with Through the Roof. Most of all, bless you for celebrating the expansion of God's kingdom as together we give the help and hope of Christ to many more people with disabilities and their families. Onward and upward into the next decade of outreach!



We're so grateful to Joni for her personalised Vital Link articles over the charity's 20 years. Due to her increasingly pressured work schedule Joni is now reducing some of her writing commitments, and so sadly, this marks her last article for us. Thank you Joni for all your warmth and affirmation of the work – we'll miss hearing from you. You can keep up to date with everything Joni's doing at **www.joniandfriends.org**.

Forum For All

Disabled students can face many difficulties: inaccessible facilities and transport; barriers to participation in social events; hardships from cuts to Disabled Students' Allowance; the increase in everyday discrimination and hate crime that disabled people currently face in the UK. Shockingly, when they seek help from their universities they are frequently referred to counselling, as if the problem lay with them, not the societal barriers around them.

Christian students on campus have a wonderful opportunity to show the love of God in practical ways. We're excited to be working with the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship to help Christian Unions and student Christian groups reach out to disabled students.

Our guide to becoming an inclusive church, 'Be a Roofbreaker' has been reissued in a new downloadable student edition. Extracts are now appearing on the UCCF website as separate articles, advising Christian Unions on making provision for welcoming students with different disabilities into their groups and meetings.

You can find the extracts at **www.uccf.org.uk/cu-leader-resources/students-with-disabilities** or buy the complete booklet for £3 from **www.throughtheroof.org**.

We've really enjoyed contributing to UCCF's annual training event, Forum, for the past three years. With around 230,000 disabled students in UK universities, talking to CU leaders about how they can reach out to disabled students with the Gospel and ensure that everyone can fully participate and contribute within the life of the CU is vital work.

Young people who come to Christ as students make up a significant part of the Church. By bringing the Gospel to disabled students and enabling them to exercise their gifts in a student Christian group, we hope to see a more complete Church grow.

All Aboard! Holidays in 2018

We've a packed programme of holidays and retreats in 2018. Check out the selection below, and get in touch with the office on **01372 749955** or **info@ throughtheroof.org** to find out more and apply. Places are limited for all breaks.

TTR@Center Parcs (Sherwood Forest, Nottingham) June 11-15

Join us in Sherwood Forest, Nottinghamshire for this fun-filled holiday where everyone helps each other. Enjoy a wide variety of activities

Out and about on the accessible bikes

and come together for food and fellowship. Cost: £415

Treloar's (DCF Activity Holiday – Alton, Hampshire) July 30 – August 4

This all-age holiday has an action-packed programme of activities, fun and fellowship. Activities will probably include: swimming, bowling, archery and canoeing with visits to Bird World and a pub lunch. Accommodation fully accessible with ensuite rooms. General help provided. Cost: **£555**

Babbacombe (DCF Coastal Holiday – Devon) **Sept 21-28**

Relax and enjoy the beach and hotel stay. There are coastal walks and stunning views of the bay from the



'All wrapped up' in the mummy game on the Treloar holiday

hotel, plus an ice cream shop nearby. Cost: £745

Brunel Manor Refreshment Week (Torquay) April 9-13

Fellowship, food, and recharging of batteries as Through the Roof hold our first 'week of refreshment'. Let's explore the scriptures together with a programme of prayer, worship and teaching, as well as free afternoons to explore the lovely countryside, visit Torquay, or simply be in these amazing surroundings. Cost: **£300**

High Leigh 'Time Out With God' (Herts) Aug 25-26

A quiet weekend at the High Leigh Conference Centre, spending some quality time meeting with God as a group and individually. Cost: **£127**

Personal Care

Our supported group holidays for disabled people offer an organised programme of accessible accommodation, meals, excursions and Christian input. Volunteers provide general help, support, encouragement and assistance with wheelchairs etc to ensure a great time of fun and fellowship.

Due to changes in legislation we regret that we are now unable to provide volunteers to do personal care on our holidays, including feeding, washing, dressing and using the toilet. If personal care is required it is now the responsibility of guests to bring their own family member, friend or employed carer, who will be charged at a discounted 'guest carer' rate.



Help us get the wheelchairs where they're needed

Technically Handy

Are you technically minded, able to travel to Aldershot, and interested in helping Wheels for the World's work at our wheelchair warehouse? We're looking for a regular volunteer to help with sorting and repairs of some second-hand wheelchairs. Most of our donated wheelchairs go to Parkhurst prison to be fully refurbished before being sent to their new owners, but some won't need quite as heavy-duty a fix, and we get the work done on our own site. It's an ideal role for someone with handy-person skills, who enjoys problem-solving, and wants to do something that will change the lives of disabled people. You'd be working with another volunteer, and making a real difference. If you'd like to find out more, or want to come down for a visit, please contact the office on **01372 749955**.



We've lots of exciting plans for 2018 and beyond, but we need your ongoing support to make them happen. Every donation makes a massive difference to the life of a disabled person in need of God's love and physical help. Could you be part of achieving those plans by giving regularly? Please fill out the enclosed standing order form (or contact us for other ways to give) if you can. Thank you.

Sit Down! By Dr. Mike Townsend, Chair of Trustees

"Mike, for goodness' sake, SIT DOWN!" I have learned a lot since Through the Roof began, and Sheena's command was a learning experience right at the start. I was engaged in a deep discussion with her. Sheena was sitting in a wheelchair, and I was towering over her. I abruptly learnt that it is much better to sit down to chat with folk in wheelchairs rather than addressing them from a lofty position. I'd never thought about this before! In fact that is often the issue.

Much of Through the Roof's work over these twenty years has been to help people think, change attitudes, and alter practice. Sheena got me up to speed in a friendly way. So often we get a bit defensive about our disabilities - particularly the ways people talk or relate to us.

In August I was on Premier Christian Radio to discuss a recent Scope survey. One finding disturbed me; 'Two thirds of the British public feel uncomfortable talking to disabled people.' They either do not know how to approach them or the correct words to use. Communication is much more important than correctness. As a blind person I 'watch' television. When I understand something, I say, "I see what you mean!" If people offer help or ask about the use of words, I am very happy, like Sheena, to put them at ease and explain in a friendly manner.

Sometimes we may be surprised by our discoveries. It is good to think our way into the experiences of others. When the paralysed man came through the roof and arrived at Jesus' feet, it was obvious what he needed – he was



Mike speaks at our 20th anniversary celebration

paralysed! He needed healing. But Jesus' words were, "Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5). That's what we all need whether we regard ourselves as disabled or not. The paralysed man was released into a new life and walked away healed and free.

The people were amazed.

My experience with Through the Roof has taught me to be friendly, positive and clear with those who do not understand disability. They may get a surprise like those who brought the paralysed man to Jesus. Let's try to break down the barriers between disabled people and the public. Perhaps through our Spirit-led efforts, we may alter the results of the next Scope survey.

A Whole New World (Wide Web)



To celebrate our 20th Anniversary we've launched a fresh, new, fully accessible website, thanks to our partners Access by Design, and their new 'Run Your Own Website' project.

We hope it inspires you, and that the new structure makes it easier for you to find what you want and the layout is intended to be clearer and less confusing, with all the main features only 2 or 3 clicks away!

The website is responsive, meaning it automatically adjusts to the dimensions of your screen so it can be viewed on PC, laptop, mobile and tablet with options for large text, and a Dyslexia-friendly version. It should hopefully help us showcase some of the amazing photos from our distributions and holidays, so you can see how you're helping people and changing lives.

Check it out at **www.throughtheroof.org** and let us know what you think.

Tributes

Sadly, we report the deaths and pay tribute to the lives of three unique, and very much-loved supporters of the work.

Celia Nicholson shared the values and believed strongly in the vision of Through the Roof, and we are hugely grateful for her faithful service as a trustee and advocate since the early years of the charity. Celia had such a gentle spirit, and a great love for all people. Her Christ-like kindness, warmth and compassion were clearly evident and she enriched the lives of all who met her. We're thankful that part of the retiring collection from the Service of Thanksgiving to God for her life will benefit TTR. Her son, Simon, has also set up a donation page for those wishing to give in her memory: **www.justgiving.com/fundraising/inmemoryofcelia-ttr**.

Malc – husband to Glenda Pike, our Wheels for the World Co-ordinator for many years, died suddenly the day after he'd finished bringing in the harvest. We are hugely grateful to Malcolm's quiet but unswerving support of Glenda, and his willing loan to the charity of his barns, where our wheelchairs were stored (in-between harvests) prior to being sent to Parkhurst for refurbishment and then on their return before shipping overseas. Please do pray for Glenda and the family.

DCF Group Leader, holiday helper, carer to disabled children, and avid Wheels supporter, Joyce Fox, also passed away this summer having lived her life dedicated to serving others, especially people with disabilities. Her Thanksgiving service was an uplifting occasion and was so appropriate in acknowledging Joyce's life. We're so grateful to the Fox family for nominating Through the Roof to benefit from her estate left to charitable purposes in her will. In life she helped hundreds of people, and in death hundreds more around the world will benefit from her kindness. Give thanks for Joyce's life and that she is now with her Lord and Saviour.

Please contact us to discuss how to leave a legacy that can further the work and be a blessing to disabled people.



Sharing time and cake in Bristol

New Friends in Bristol

The New Bristol Horfield DCF Group By Alice Langtree, Trustee and Group member

We had a wonderful party to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Through the Roof and launch the new Bristol TTR group. 24 of us enjoyed singing praise to God, hearing the vision for the group, sharing ideas, and praying for God's wisdom to inform our discussions.

We made new friends, laughed and chatted before tucking into a magnificent tea accompanied by a tasty piece of celebration cake!

If you'd like to hold your own 20th anniversary celebration (perhaps you're looking for an excuse for a tasty piece of celebration cake?) then please contact us on **01372 749955** – we have packs ready to send out.

ONE in Worship

Tim Wood and Ros Bayes had a great time working at the ONE Event in Lincoln. Over five days, they spoke to over 400 people about Through the Roof – introducing our message of inclusion to many new attendees. Our new guide to welcoming autistic young people, 'A Welcoming Place', proved particularly popular.

Ros joined in worship with the Prospects group during the weekend and found it really inspiring, with heartfelt sung worship; Bible truths being presented through puppets; bandicrafts; and

Bible truths being presented through puppets; handicrafts; and clear teaching. It was thrilling to hear people with learning disabilities sharing what Jesus means to them, and praying for one another and for those leading their group.

If you're interested in finding out about 'A Welcoming Place', it's available now from www.throughtheroof.org for £5.



Through the Roof

Full Access By Jenny Edwards M.B.E.

Many of you will know the phrase 'the penny dropped', meaning that a realisation has come to your mind about something - well that happened to me yesterday during our church service. It was during our worship time when someone from the congregation came up to the front and spoke about the story in Mark 2 verses 1-18. This of course is the story of the friends lowering the paralysed man down to Jesus' feet through the roof. The part that was emphasised was the amazing faith of the man's friends, faith that caused them to persevere in getting the disabled man to Jesus. This is of course true and we all know times when others encouraging faith has helped us overcome a difficulty. So what 'penny dropped'?

At Through the Roof we are very conscious of problems of access in



Access all areas!

buildings of all kinds, and this subject often comes up when we relate this story. But, due to the work Christ did for us on the cross, we no longer have to go to such lengths to see Jesus or to worship, or to talk to Him. There are NO access barriers to Jesus now, we can access Him whenever, wherever and however we want or need to. Those with a disability have no challenges of access to Jesus, He is there for them every minute of the day and night. We are aware that friends help us and often their faith helps bring us to a conclusion we are happy with, BUT we no longer have to rely on friends to take us to Jesus or lower us through the roof in order to speak with Him. How amazing is that. We have a wonderful risen, living Saviour who is there for us every second of every day, and there are NO access issues - Hallelujah!



Thank you, watery fundraisers ! (photo by Sam Goodridge)

Water Team!

14 intrepid paddlers (apparently they're not called rowers), plus one crucial drummer to keep everyone locked to the beat, took to the River Thames as part of Through the Roof's first-ever team entry into the Kingston Rotary Club Dragon Boat race.

The organisation, atmosphere, race format, scheduling (and weather) were all excellent and with some disabled team-members in our boat we were impressed by the inclusiveness of the day.

Pleasingly we were able to improve on our time in each of the three races, with our fastest time of 1 minute 2 seconds placing us in a very respectable 20th out of 53 boats. As well as having a lovely day on the river, our goal of £200 per person was blown

out of the water, as the whole team raised a fantastic total of £3,346, plus gift aid. Thank you to everyone who took part! If you'd like to fundraise to support Through the Roof's work, please get in touch. We can supply resources, and even suggest a few fun ways to get together and raise money.

Blessed to be Together

Church Minister and Roofbreaker, Rev Erica Wishart, brought together her local community for a 'birthday tea' to celebrate 20 years of Through the Roof.

The congregation at Tranent Parish Church, East Lothian invited parents and children from local schools, and church members invited others, provided home baking, and served teas, coffees and juice. Every visitor was given a warm welcome and a free TTR pen or balloon as well as information about the charity and details of the church's monthly all-age service.

Church members and young mums with babies enjoyed a cuppa and a cake while waiting for their group to begin. The main crowd were children and staff from The Hub - a unit for children with severe and complex disabilities. Everyone



A good time had by all



Erica explains what TTR is all about

watched the DVD introducing TTR's work, and the children had a brilliant time as they enthusiastically devoured the delicious home baking!

Erica told us it was heart-warming to see her congregation mixing with pupils with complex needs and singing 'He's Got the Whole World in His Hands', accompanied by sign language. The school was so impressed they invited the church to an event the following week - a great step forward for churchschool-community links.

Erica was delighted at raising £125. She said, "That was a blessing but importantly, we experienced the blessing of people with different abilities having fun together. The Hub are keen for us to put on a short afternoon tea again and that seems like too good an opportunity to miss! Thank you Through the Roof for giving us the idea and for the wonderful resources you provided... It was so much fun".

Well done Erica and Tranent Church for your efforts. If you want to celebrate with family, friends, neighbours, home group or church, please contact us for your free pack.

'Give it a Go!' The DCF Treloar's Holiday

12 guests had a great DCF activity break – full of cycling, climbing, and just relaxing together – at Treloar's College near Alton. One holidaymaker, Heidi, told us, "This is my third year and the analogy I made after the first year remains the same. When I was there I was like a fish in an enormous pond - I was in the world where I fitted in, no struggles, no trying to keep up with everyone. Whereas back at home, thanks to my brilliant friends and family I have lots of streams of water but not the big pond!"



Fun and fellowship at Treloar

Becky, another guest, told us "DCF has given me the chance I hadn't had for several years to go on holiday, where I could relax and participate without barriers... Everyone was so friendly and caring – I definitely wasn't left on the sidelines! ... I've made good friends through these holidays, everyone looks out for each other. One of many highlights this year was the climbing wall, where everyone who wanted to could go as far as they felt able with as much or little support as they needed.

I always find the spiritual input uplifting and challenging... We can be real about the ups and downs of living with a disability, yet God sees us as no different and has a plan for each of us. If you've been wondering about these holidays then give it a go! Whatever your age or ability, you'd be made to feel most welcome."

You can find more details about next year's holidays earlier in this issue.

Defending the Fatherless

Wheels for the World in Uganda, and Churches Inc in Mozambique. By Shaun Burrows, International Missions Manager

'Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked' Psalms 82:3-4

Otwao has Cerebral Palsy, and although he can hear and see, he is unable to move the rest of his body. Like so many other disabled children in Africa, he lives his life in obscurity. Otwao lives in the Kumi region of Uganda and arrived at our Distribution Centre with his mother in hope of a wheelchair.



He and his mother live on their own in a reed hut. She goes to

work every day and used to carry Otwao on her back, but since he's grown too large for her to carry, she has had to leave him at home, lying alone on a cold floor until she returns in the evening. He was given a wheelchair, and is now able to enjoy company and freedom with her again.



Pastor Davis and the team train delegates

Your Wheels team gave out over 130 wheelchairs in Kumi earlier this year – plus mobility aids, and advice, encouragement, and practical support for disabled Ugandans. Through your support, the lives of disabled people and their families – like Otwao and his mother – have been transformed. We have trips to Uganda (11th to 20th April), Kenya (5th to 15th September) and Mozambique (14th to 24th November) planned for 2018; please get in touch if you'd like to join or financially support any of these distributions.

Stepping in with love: Churches Inc

Proverbs 24:11 tells us to 'Rescue those who are being led away to death; hold back those who are stumbling towards the slaughter'. A church leader in our Mozambique team was told a story about a family in his community with a severely disabled child. Shockingly, they received advice from others in their community to appease God by sacrificing the child. Another church leader told us about a family in his community who had been criticised by their neighbours for not having ended their disabled child's life to bring the "suffering to an end".

Thankfully, in these cases the church had already stepped in with love and compassion, sharing the Gospel, and advising and reassuring the families who are now caring for their children. But witchcraft and prejudiced cultural strongholds are very powerful in some of the rural areas of Africa we visit, and disabled people can be particularly vulnerable. Our Churches Inc. program

aims to help the church equip communities and individuals to be fully inclusive, and spread a Christian perspective on disability, so all are valued, included and encouraged.



Stepping in with love, and offering an inclusive vision

Thanks to our partner Melvyn Kelly (from Northern Ireland but based in Mozambique), we spoke with eight different groups and churches around Maputo, including training 180 church leaders and elders, plus a two-day workshop, and a training evening with Bible students. It was a challenging trip, but we made some great relationships, and began to see a move in attitudes towards welcoming disabled people. You can find some excellent video blogs from the trip through **www.throughtheroof.org**.

We have Churches Inc trips planned for Kenya (7th to 17th February 2018), Tanzania (6th to 16th June) and Sierra Leone (9th to 17th October). If you would like information about these trips, or would like to support or apply to join a team, please see our website or contact me at **Shaun@throughtheroof.org.**

Join Us to Change More Lives



Your regular gift can make a difference to a disabled person every day

Please set up a standing order to help us plan for the future and give a wheelchair and Bible to those without; offer friendship and group holidays to those who feel lonely; and provide inclusive resources and support to enrich church life.

Set up a regular donation by using the form on the back of this sheet, or visit **www.justgiving.com/ttr**

Please return this form to: Through the Roof, PO Box 353, Epsom, KT18 5WS

Visit **www.throughtheroof.org** to find out more about our other life-changing work.



Through the roo





Through the Roof Charitable Trust Ltd is a UK Registered Charity number 04201510 with offices at Suite B1, Aviary Court, 138 Miles Road, EPSOM, KT19 9AB. It is also a Registered Charity Number 1087788.







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