



vital link

The Newsletter for Through the Roof



Wheels on Your TV



A Church That Goes The Extra Mile



International Intentions



Get Away



God At Work In Through The Roof

Your help is changing lives!

God is using Through the Roof to change people's lives, and there's even more we could be doing! That is a summary of what you told us in our recent survey.

As we discern God's plans for the future of TTR considering the challenges and new opportunities of the past year, we were delighted that 86 people completed a survey to tell us where they believe God is working through the charity and leading us for the next season. We gained diverse feedback from all corners of the charity, including prayer supporters, Vital Link readers, Roofbreakers, Wheels and DCF team-members, donors, staff and trustees, from teenagers to 70+. Many who answered the questions have journeyed with us for many years while some had only just met us. UK and overseas partners also gave their input.

"As a disabled person I have been blessed and challenged beyond anything I could have expected"

With such a wide response there were many different insights, plus some common themes emerged. The charity's vision and mission were 'fully supported' by 97% of respondents and our Christian distinctive was recognised as a key aspect of that. One typical comment was that "it is very apparent that Through the Roof is a Christian charity and tries to be Jesus' hands, feet, voice".

People recognised God at work, saying, "I am excited to see what God has done and continues to do through TTR". God seems to be using

Through the Roof as a vehicle for blessing and positive change in the lives of disabled people. One person explained that they have seen God at work, "through many testimonies I've heard over the years from disabled people, which show how He is at work in their lives".

God is also positively influencing church life through us, e.g. "I have been able to use TTR resources and my own experiences too - to help church groups view disability differently".

A major theme which was commented on widely, which we are committed to build on further, was of enabling disabled people, e.g. "love how they encourage the gifts of people with disabilities. TTR does try to put its own message into practice and set a good example for others to follow."

This theme was strongly articulated by disabled people themselves, demonstrated by the following two quotes...

"As a disabled person myself I have been given many opportunities to be involved and I feel my contribution has been valued and appreciated. I have changed as a result of being involved and trust others' lives have been changed too".

"As a disabled person I have been blessed and challenged beyond anything I could have expected when I signed up for my first mission trip. Thank you TTR for providing a space where I can serve. I believe strongly that Jesus has a plan and purpose for all people and that people with disabilities have unique insights and experiences that can bless and

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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 Alpha House, Alpha Place, Garth Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4TQ. 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

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encourage (and where appropriate) challenge the church and bear testimony to the faithfulness of God".

People also highlighted some areas which could be strengthened. The biggest one concerned our profile and getting our message out, demonstrated by the following comment, "Recognition of TTR in churches is still very low. We do our best to point people to you, but so often have to explain who you are first". Trustees and staff are considering this

theme along with all the feedback as we develop further plans for the future.

Thank you to everyone who took part in our survey—you can read the report for yourself on our website. As you do, we'd encourage you to keep spreading the word about TTR's work in your church or community. We'd love to expand the range of people we help, and with your help, we make a massive difference!

Wheels On Your TV

If you watched Songs of Praise on Sunday 18th July, you'd have caught a short piece about Wheels for the World, focussing on the work of our amazing volunteers at the Aldershot warehouse. We're excited about this great opportunity to tell people across the UK about the life-changing work you support through Wheels. The TV crew filmed volunteers working to refurbish wheelchairs, and interviewed Shaun, our International Missions Manager, and a few other volunteers who've been on distributions. The episode should still be available on the BBC iPlayer



Thank you to the warehouse volunteers and team for representing Wheels for the BBC

when this issue comes out—give it a watch if you missed it, or recommend it to your friends to help them find out more about Wheels.

A Church That Goes The Extra Mile

Guildford Baptist Church is the latest recipient of Through the Roof's 'Luke 5 Award' for disability inclusion. The nomination came from a disabled member of the church known as 'Laurie' who describes it as a 'fantastic church' and explains how he has personally been blessed by their support.

Laurie uses a wheelchair due to cerebral palsy and communicates through an augmentative communication device – but wants people to know that he is "more than happy being in a wheelchair and I feel that God has made me like this and it is not wrong."

Guildford Baptist Church has not only included Laurie, but encouraged him to take an active role. He says, "I am writing magazines, helping out with a special needs group, emailing prayers and talks of services and helping with social media." As well as supporting him with his Christian beliefs, he also says "They are helping me with my social life such as meeting new people on Zoom to allow me to have better communication skills and friendships."

The church took the proactive step of asking Through the Roof for a Church Disability Awareness workshop (currently delivered over Zoom) and Laurie took part himself, sharing some of his own experiences. It was indicative of the 'heart' of the church that so many people attended the workshop to find out more about how they could each play their part.

You'll find Guildford Baptist Church on Through the Roof's online map of churches with a Roofbreaker. Have a look at GBC's website (www.guildfordbaptist.org) – you'll find a great section explaining all the accessible features of the church including automatic doors, a lift to all floors, accessible toilets (one with a hoist and adjustable changing bench), a loop system and BSL signers at most services. The church has certainly made the most of a recent building project to improve physical access. There's also a new coffee house ministry 'Open Grounds Café' providing training and work experience for those with a mental health condition and/or learning disability. It's definitely a church that goes the 'extra mile' to include disabled people.



Congratulations to Guildford Baptist Church

Welcome Beth!

We are thrilled to have Beth Rogers join us as a Social Media Volunteer. Beth is part of the Manchester Roofbreaker Network and the Student Network. She's currently on the New Wine Discipleship year and will be starting a Medicine Degree in September in Newcastle where she is also keen to see a Roofbreaker Network develop. When she isn't studying, she loves to do wheelchair ballroom and Latin dancing!

As a full-time wheelchair user, Beth describes how inclusion for all in the church is something very close to her heart: "Having personally had both positive and negative experiences of inclusion in the church and having also seen others struggling to access church because of their additional needs, I am passionate about working towards a world where there are no barriers in the church... God loves every person regardless of disability, so churches should reflect that by making the church inclusive for all".

Beth's new role, producing content for TTR's Facebook and Instagram pages and developing what we offer there, will help to spread the word about TTR's work, and the message of inclusion to a younger generation.

Beth told us that it's important for churches to have a Roofbreaker, "to ensure that inclusion is a priority in each church, as it can sometimes be overlooked and all that might be provided is a ramp – true inclusivity is so much more than this", but that you don't need to be an expert on disability to be an effective Roofbreaker. As Beth says, "inclusion is not a one size fits all piece of work, so having a Roofbreaker allows each church to individually work on

accessibility, which can make the most impact on creating an inclusive church community".

In her experience, she's felt that disabled people can be nervous going to a new church not knowing whether the church will be welcoming and accessible to them. But knowing that there is a Roofbreaker at work gives a point of contact to ease any anxiety and shows people that they are valued.

We are so thankful that Beth is taking on these new roles following our New Wine seminar earlier this year 'Leading from a place of disability' and look forward to serving God together to enable inclusion, participation and belonging in churches and Christian activities.

Find us on social media by searching for '**TTRchangeslives**' on Facebook or Instagram, or **@TTRchangeslives** on Twitter.



Beth will be helping out with TTR's social media accounts

Joining Together To Transform Lives

Across the UK groups of Christians are joining together with the aim of making sure disabled people can be fully included in Christian life. These are Through the Roof's Area Networks for 'Roofbreakers'.

We believe every church needs a Roofbreaker, and the Networks are part of the support offered. We now have 14 Networks meeting in local areas across the UK, and 3 further UK-wide Networks for Roofbreakers in rural areas, for students, and for Roofbreakers involved in ministry to the Deaf community.

Have a look on our online map to find the Network nearest to you (or if there isn't one in your area then let's talk about starting one!) You can get in touch with your local Network Co-ordinator or contact Through the Roof to find out more.

As well as these Networks, Through the Roof offers Church Disability Awareness workshops, a Church Disability Toolkit and a church audit document – all of which are FREE for churches with Roofbreakers. There's also a Facebook group where Roofbreakers can share information and ideas.

Does your church have a Roofbreaker? We'd love to encourage you to join us in this vision.

Have a look at the 'Church Inclusion' section at www.throughtheroof.org to find out more.



Visit the map at www.throughtheroof.org and sign your church up

How Creative Are You? What Are Your Gifts?

By Dr. Mike Townsend, Chair of Trustees

The pandemic has forced us to be innovative.

What is the first thing we discover about God? "In the beginning God created..." (Genesis 1 1).

Creativity is fundamental to God. It is also intrinsic to human nature because we are "created in the image of God" (Genesis 1 27).

I was asked to be a keynote speaker at a conference of Christian artists. Me!? Actually, I am a sculptor. I loved clay modelling at school. The crafts teacher asked me to sculpt the head of Peter White, the well-known BBC broadcaster, during a Speech day event. I ran my cold clayey hands over Peter's face. It worked. The visiting parents all exclaimed, "that's Peter White", and my piece was exhibited in Birmingham Museum for several years.



Creativity is part of our nature – how could you use yours?

I reminded the Christian artists at the conference that creativity is part of God's image in us. Jesus is the heart of creation.

"Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made." (John 1 1).

We all have the ability to be creative and use our gifts for Jesus, but many disabled people lack the opportunity to discover their gifts. We are often excluded from using what God has given to us in His worship and service.

Some years ago I ran a scheme for disabled people to enable them to discover and develop their Christian gifts. It was known as Christian Service Training. Each course lasted a year. A key theme was: "The LORD has filled Bezalel with the Spirit of God, giving him great wisdom, intelligence, and skill in all kinds of crafts. He is able to create ..." (Exodus 35 31). As a result, God's Spirit has enabled a number of disabled people to serve God all over the world.

Perhaps you feel you can do very little. Gladys Major was an elderly blind and partially deaf Cornish lady. She told God she could do nothing. God told her that she could knit. Gladys knitted garments to raise funds for Torch Trust and Slavic Gospel Mission. Soon friends joined her. Others created a range of crafts items. She began a small market in St Ives selling the crafts. This developed into the St Ives Missionary Christmas Market. Thousands flocked to the stalls which filled the town. Massed Cornish choirs sang in the evenings. Thousands of pounds were raised by this lady, who thought she could do nothing.

As we look at God's plans for Through the Roof, we are praying about expanding the opportunities for disabled people to enjoy serving God, and we pray that you will be part of this journey.

Thank You Ros

A massive thank you to Ros Dakin, our Training Resources Developer, who is retiring after seven and a half years working for Through the Roof. Ros has lent her talents to writing publications, guides, resources, and over a hundred blog posts for Through the Roof, and developed many of the resources we use now to help transform lives in churches in the UK and overseas. Amazing work! CEO, Tim, said: "Ros has been a vital team-member. Writing blogs, resources and content from a Biblical perspective of disability, plus her personal experience of living with a disabled family member has brought valuable new insights, understanding and challenge to people's thinking. My own view of disability has been shaped by Ros' writing, and many others will have been blessed by her too."

She and her husband Keith still plan to volunteer for TTR, and will be lending their time and skills to our ongoing retreats and 'Lounge' online meet-ups.



Thank you Ros!

An Eventful Time

We are pleased to announce a series of online events planned for the months ahead. We would love you to join us, and please spread the message and invite others too.

Saturday 16th October 2021: An event for all

Presentation by: Jonathan Bryan

Jonathan is the teenage author of highly-acclaimed book, 'Eye Can Write', which tells his powerful story of



communicating through eye movements only. Jonathan, who has profound and multiple disabilities, will share how his life is fulfilled through faith, family and friends. He is a disability

activist and founded 'Teach Us Too' - a charity advocating for all children to be taught literacy, regardless of their label. Find out more at www.eyecantalk.net and www.teachustoo.org.uk

Saturday 20th November 2021: Encouraging Roofbreakers

Presentation by: Katherine-Alice Grasham – Disability Officer for the Diocese of Leeds

Saturday 22nd January 2022: An event for Northern Ireland

Presentation by: Brian Gault MBE – author of 'Look, No Hands!' – the compelling story of Brian, born with no arms, and his faith and strength to take a stand for those in need around the world.

Saturday 12th February 2022: Details to follow!

Further details in your next Vital Link

All events are 10.30am – 12.00 midday and will take place over Zoom. Contact the TTR office if you would like to join us: info@throughtheroof.org or **01372 749955**. Online booking will also be available via our website/social media before each event. These events are free to attend, but any donations to support them would be welcome.

Booking for Jonathan's event will be open soon – look out for details on www.throughtheroof.org

Giving 125%

If you're a UK taxpayer, then TTR can claim an extra 25% on any donations you make to our work—at no cost to you. If you pay tax in the UK, please make sure that we have your up-to-date details, by letting us know if you've changed address or tax status. Please contact us on info@throughtheroof.org with any changes, or if you'd like to register a Gift Aid Declaration. Thank you!

Devotions in the Diary

We invite you to join us for a time of prayer together once a month via Zoom. Prayer is at the heart of all we do at Through the Roof. We are grateful for the many supporters who receive the prayer email each week and faithfully pray with us.

We would also like to provide a new opportunity for supporters to join us for a monthly time of joint prayer online. As a staff team, we gather on Zoom each Monday morning to start the week in prayer, and we would like to open this up to anyone who would like to join us on the first Monday of each month, 9.30 – 10.15am beginning Monday 6th September.

We do hope that you will want to join with us in this opportunity to hear a short devotion, learn more about the work, and share in a time of prayer together as we acknowledge our reliance on God and ask for His guidance and blessing on the work.

If you are interested in receiving the Zoom link, or would like more information, please contact the Through the Roof office: info@throughtheroof.org or ring **01372 749955**.



Join us for devotions on the first Monday of every month.

International Intentions

Although the ongoing travel restrictions are preventing our teams from travelling abroad, we have made several adjustments to our International Missions programmes to ensure that we can still demonstrate God's love in a practical way.

Many refugees received a wheelchair or suitable mobility aid at our first Supported Distribution at the Bidi Bidi refugee camp in Uganda. We'll be beginning our second one in early August in Elburgon, Kenya, and we'll bring you a report from that next issue. As soon as the countries within our sphere of ministry gradually move out of COVID restrictions we will begin to plan face-to-face mission trips again.

Our warehouse is fully operational once more, and we encourage anyone close to Aldershot who wishes to help out on Wednesdays to contact

Shaun@throughtheroof.org, as we are in need of a few more volunteers to clean wheelchairs, fit belts and front casters, and assist with the storage and loading. We can train people on what's needed and would love to have you join us. The warehouse team are currently our main refurbishers, as the roof on our prison workshop is being repaired. We're grateful for the hard work and skills of the volunteers that keep things moving.

We are delighted that so many people are signing up for our Roofbreaker International programme, which was launched in response to the global restrictions, particularly in East and West Africa. This is enabling those who lead disability programmes in their respective countries to meet their counterparts in their neighbouring countries. Together they are drawing in and encouraging those within their local Church communities to sign up as a Roofbreaker and show Jesus' love to disabled people.



We'll be back working in Kenya in 2022

We are looking at arranging Wheels distributions to locations where it would be possible to do either a Supported or In-person distribution next year, with the possibility of teams working with our partners in

- **Kumi, Uganda (Jan/Feb 2022)** and
- **Kerala, India (Spring/Summer 2022).**

We are still trying to proceed with a Wheels distribution in Mozambique (in Mocuba – **6th – 13th October 2021**) as soon as travel restrictions and the worldwide effects of the Covid Pandemic make it possible.

If you are interested in being on the team for any of these trips, please contact **helen@throughtheroof.org** and we will keep you updated as they progress.

Get Away

We're planning an in-person Retreat! We'll be gathering at **Ashburnham Place** Christian conference and prayer centre, a magnificent English country house, in a peaceful rural setting, near Battle, East Sussex TN33 9NF, from **6th – 12th September 2021**. (Subject to lifting of restrictions as was expected by mid-July).

Come and enjoy some long overdue fellowship, Christian input, activities and 1 or 2 outings. Accommodation is in shared en-suite bedrooms. Places are limited so for further information check our website and Facebook pages, or contact: **jan@throughtheroof.org** or **01372 749955** to book your place.



We're looking forward to gathering again next month

Through the Roof – Resource List

Publications, Books and Resources to Help You Make a Difference

Prices valid until August 2022



We have new download-only resources available at www.throughtheroof.org

Removing Barriers (Download Only – visit www.throughtheroof.org)

Usually £5 -- This great resource is Free for Roofbreakers

A new version of the 'Removing Barriers' Disability Self-Assessment 'Audit' with new content for 2021. Removing Barriers is Through the Roof's self-assessment resource for churches, organisations and groups to check against a comprehensive set of measures to see how inclusive their services, activities and programmes are for disabled people. The Removing Barriers resource is a questionnaire organised around five main sections.

The Message You Give, Having a Culture of Disability Inclusion, Arrival and Welcome, Enabling Everyone to Take Part, Belonging, Discipleship and Growth

When you use the guide, you're directed to other appropriate information and resources to help address areas which need some input, as well as resources to help create an action plan for ongoing work.

Church Disability Toolkit (Download Only – Visit www.throughtheroof.org)

Usually £5 -- Free for Roofbreakers

A series of downloadable guides covering the various areas of church life and how they each have a part to play to facilitate the full inclusion of disabled people. This is an essential toolkit for any church wanting to ensure that the whole church is working together to include disabled people.

TTR's own resources are also available at 50% off for Roofbreakers* – take a look at the shop on www.throughtheroof.org to find out more, or contact janet@throughtheroof.org to find out more about becoming a Roofbreaker.

*. – A code will be provided on request for Roofbreakers to access these special deals at checkout. TTR reserves the right to add or remove any products to these deals at any point.

We have several other books and resources available. Please visit www.throughtheroof.org to see the full range.

Through the Roof Publications:	Price	No.	Total
A Church That Cares – A practical guide to help churches provide pastoral care for disabled people and their families	£5.00		
Steward / Welcome Team cards – Folding pocket sized cards give the information needed to provide a warm and informed welcome to disabled people.	£2.00 for 10 or £8.00 for 50		
Be a Roofbreaker! Lists simple, practical ways to equip your church to be a welcoming and inclusive place for all (topics include mental health, autism, blindness, and new sections on disability in the Bible, and dementia).	£5.00		
A Welcoming Place – Autistic Young People in Church: helping you create an environment in your youth and children's work which includes everyone, including those with autistic spectrum conditions. It includes practical strategies, proven approaches, and a comprehensive index.	£5.00		
Parachute Bible Stories: A series of 20 Bible stories with directions for delivering hands-on Bible experiences for all abilities.	£5.00		
Hearts in Transformation: A six lesson Bible Study, exploring Biblical encouragement for those living with disability	£3.00		

Bible Teaser Postcards - A simple game that will inspire players to look at disability in the Bible, and to reflect on the amazing role disabled people have played. Two different packs available.	£5.00 for one pack of 10 Or £7.50 for both packs		
Books & Training:	Price	No.	Total
Biblica Accessible New Testament: This NIV accessible edition breaks down many barriers to reading, opening up the text to even more people. Includes illustrations to aid understanding, a clear 16pt font, single column format, and simple navigation.	£7.99		
Depressed or Possessed - Christians Recognising and Responding to Mental Illness by Pastor Joe Hayes. Equips pastors and church workers with information and seeks to clarify many of the common misunderstandings surrounding mental health.	£6.99		
Joni and Ken: An Untold Love Story by Ken & Joni Eareckson Tada. The true love story of this adored and respected couple, who, through depression, pain, and cancer, faced the kind of testing and trials few could even conceive. Includes an eight-page photo section.	£9.99		
Disability and the Gospel By Michael S. Beates with a foreword by Joni Eareckson Tada. Working through Bible passages on brokenness and disability, Michael shows us how to embrace our own brokenness and the brokenness of others.	£14.99		
Enabling Church Course – Produced by Churches for all, this is an eight-session course on enriching church life through sharing mission and ministry together with disabled people. Download only version available for £25 from www.throughtheroof.org.uk	£35.00		
We rely on support from generous donors like you – your gifts keep Through the Roof changing lives. Thank you!			
DONATION to the wider work of TTR			
POSTAGE AND PACKING £2.50 FOR ORDERS UP TO AND INCLUDING £20.00 ; £5.00 FOR ORDERS OVER £20.00			£
TOTAL ENCLOSED			£

Please visit www.throughtheroof.org to donate online or by bank transfer

Please complete the following sections:

I enclose a cheque (payable to 'Through the Roof') **OR**

Credit / debit card no:

Valid from date: / Expiry date: / Security Code (Last 3 numbers on back of card):

Send to: **Through the Roof, Alpha House, Alpha Place, Garth Road, Morden, SM4 4TQ** order at www.throughtheroof.org, or ring **01372 749955**

Title: First name: Surname:

Address:

..... Postcode:

Telephone No: Email:

We'd love to keep you up to date with all of Through the Roof's ongoing work. Please tick below what you'd like to receive from us, or leave all the boxes blank if you'd prefer no contact.

- Vital Link Email (3 times a year) Vital Link in Print (3 times a year) Weekly Prayer Email
 International Missions Newsletter (Roughly every two months) Occasional Event Information

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More information can be found in our privacy policy at www.throughtheroof.org.

