



# Praise Matters

End of term - July 2010

**Christian Youth Outreach**

**Inspiring young people to live for God, for each other, for the world.**

It's been an amazing year in the life of CYO and there is so much that we want to praise God for. Thank you for all your support through gifts, encouragement and especially your prayers. Here are some of the things this year that make us overflow with praise and thanks.

## **Sanctum**

We praise God for the opportunity to run Sanctum in five schools this year, two for the first time. We're also grateful for the inspiration and resources to continue developing this to make an even greater impact on young people, and often, teachers too. But for us, the response of the young people is what makes it all worthwhile:

- This was a great experience for me as it made me stop and think about the world and God.
- It was a life changing experience.
- You changed my thoughts about life and God.

## **Moving lessons...**

Over the year we've taken many lessons. Two specific moments stand out for us.

After a lesson on disability the teacher went out and phoned her boyfriend to say how much she loved him. She'd been moved by the story of one of our visiting volunteers. A classic example of the power of testimony, and of the value of involving others in our work in schools.

Another lesson looked at miracles. It was wonderful to see young people amazed at stories of healing.

## **Sixth Form College Chaplaincy**

One of the most significant developments of the year was having Kat, and later Rachel, start work with the Sixth Form College as Chaplains. As well as the one to one pastoral work, Kat transformed the College Christmas service and for the first time put together an Easter event, both of these events being packed with students. Rachel has set up an online space on the College intranet where up to 50 students are asking and responding to questions about faith and life. We praise God for this opening and for all the students whose lives have already been touched by the ministry of Kat and Rachel.

## **Rachel & Josh @ Thurstable School**

For the past 6 weeks, we have been trying out some detached youthwork at Thurstable School, and the welcome has been amazing. The basic idea is walking around on Tuesday lunchtimes, chatting to students and listening to what they have to say. It means that we have been able to form relationships and have good discussions with many different peer groups in the school, and talk about what is important to them. We have also been acknowledged and really encouraged by the staff, who have been very friendly and helpful.

Praise God for the warm welcome from the school and the students, and for the freedom to be open about our Christian faith as we chat with students.

## **Gilberd Girl**

After taking a year 10 RE class in the Gilberd, Amy was later recognised by one of the students from that class one lunchtime. She came and sat down and the conversation that followed included everything from favourite tv shows to major relationship issues. The next few weeks she visited each lunchtime and those talks became important discussions about things she was struggling with personally. It's great to bump into her whenever we're in the school - she even briefly visited Sanctum!

## JOY

The two Joy events this year have been an amazing blessing to both the community and our young people, opening many doors for inter-church youthwork and relationships.

The latest project gave us the opportunity to help clean up and de-graffiti around our local areas and practically show God's love to many across Colchester. This was as fun as it was helpful, because it was hands-on and meant that Christian teenagers who previously felt isolated could connect with others - some said they'd met with other Christians of their own age for the first time.

This event was great to challenge young people to put their faith in action, and see how they could benefit their local community.

## Mentoring

On a Wednesday morning, in a very small room in Alderman Blaxill School, S came in and told me she had some news. S had grown up connected to church but rarely attended, and had been to some youth events and a few of her friends went, but she wasn't very involved. One weekend, sat in her room by herself, S had been listening to a Hillsong CD and decided that it was time to get serious with God. "I want to get to know him better" she explained. S knew I was a Christian and so was able to ask questions and be excited with me about her decision. A week ago S once again told me she had some exciting news - she wants to get baptised.

We praise God for the opportunity to serve the school and its young people this way and for the way Amy has become an integral part of Alderman Blaxill school life.

## Beloved

It has been amazing to see 'Beloved' develop this year from a small idea in October to running our first one the beginning of this term. We want teenage girls to know that they are amazingly and wonderfully made and we are so grateful for the opportunity to speak this into the girls' lives. Each week saw the girls open up and share with us which was a huge privilege, and their response in the feedback was amazing.

- '... it made me feel that it doesn't matter what you look like, you're special no matter what.'
- 'I feel like I have lifted some weight off my shoulders. Thank you so much'

We have been overwhelmed by the response in financial support. We are so grateful to the Gilbert school for letting us come and run it and to the many people who gave their support to this project.

## Provision

We'd like to thank loads of people and give praise to God for all those who have contributed in any way to the work of CYO over the year. For all those who have given money and all those who have prayed. To Henry Spyvee for nominating us as one of his charities for the year. To Denise who returned to become an integral part of the team as finance manager, to the Trustees, and to all who have offered their time to join us at events or in schools.

Thank you God for providing everything we need.

### .. e-news ..

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**Office: CYO**  
**PO Box 9272**  
**Colchester**  
**CO1 9AX**

**Tel & Fax 01206 863835**  
**e-mail [mail@cyocolchester.org.uk](mailto:mail@cyocolchester.org.uk)**  
**Web site [www.cyocolchester.org.uk](http://www.cyocolchester.org.uk)**  
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