

December 2008

[www.gtcc.org.uk](http://www.gtcc.org.uk)

## Update on Street Angels from Becky

Guildford Street Angels has been up and running now for ten weeks and has been going extremely well. It has been a lot of fun and the response we have had has been really positive. The relationships with the bars and clubs seem to be good. The door staff, in particular, have been very welcoming and friendly and seem to think we are an asset to the town centre. On various nights we have also been joined by Anne Milton MP, the Mayor of Guildford and the Bishop of Dorking which has been really encouraging for our volunteers.

Our team of volunteers are absolutely fantastic; we are a wonderfully diverse bunch and everyone has been very patient, willing and flexible as we have got up and running. There were a few nerves at first, but fears have been quickly put to rest as we have been out experiencing the town at night, meeting people and getting a feel for the role and having fun. The feedback I've been getting from the Street Angels is that they are surprised at how quickly the time goes, that they are really enjoying the interactions they are having with the public and that they find it a satisfying and worthwhile way to spend a Friday night.

Each week we are faced with a variety of different situations and no two nights have felt the same so far. Most of the time we are just chatting with people, letting them know who we are and that we are around if they need us. As well as introducing Street Angels to the town, the volunteers have also assisted the public in a number of different ways. Sometimes it has been quite moving to listen to people sharing what they are going through, and occasionally team members have found



themselves facing stressful situations as in one case when a man shared that he was struggling with feeling suicidal and had been self-harming, and another where Street Angels intervened in a situation with a vulnerable person who could otherwise have come to harm. More often than not though, it has just been a case of keeping our eyes and ears open to people's need and offering assistance in small ways where we can. Often we see ladies at the end of the night walking barefoot around

town carrying a pair of high heels in their hands. As an act of generosity and kindness we have been giving them pairs of flip-flops to walk home in and carrying blister plasters with us in case they are needed! Many of the ladies have been overwhelmed with this simple act and are incredibly grateful to be loved, thought of and cared for. It is such a small thing but goes a really long way in communicating



December 2008

[www.gtcc.org.uk](http://www.gtcc.org.uk)

to people that they are valued by us as a Church community in the town and by the God in whose name we serve. Other examples of how we have been helping people out are buying food for homeless people, assisting people into taxis, waiting with vulnerable people until they are safely with friends or family, offering a listening ear to people in emotional distress, and offering follow-up support to people looking for longer term help/referrals. Most recently we have been handing out lollies to people as they leave the clubs. This is part of the Safer Guildford Partnership's *shhh* campaign at Christmas. We've noticed it also has quite a calming effect: it's hard to act macho with a lolly in your mouth!

We have so far made contact with over five hundred people, the vast majority of whom have been really pleased to meet us. Most people seem to be surprised that anyone would volunteer their time for free, especially so late at night. They are grateful to know we are around. I am excited to see how the scheme grows and develops over the coming months. There are a few ideas floating around which I'll mention in future newsletters but the first thing is to recruit and train a second group so that we can start to be available for both Fridays and Saturdays every week.

Please keep us in your prayers (there are some specific requests later in this newsletter). And if you have time please pray for me as I settle into this role that I would have wisdom in finding the balance between my work and family life and get better at juggling my hours for street angels with being a new mother.

Grace and peace,

*Becky*

## More Street Angels needed

With the success of Friday night Street Angels we want to start running Street Angels on Saturday nights as soon as possible. But to do that we need more Street Angel volunteers. Starting in the new-year we will be recruiting a second wave of Street Angels, particularly for Saturday nights but also for anyone who missed out on joining Friday nights the first time round.

If you want to volunteer or know someone else who does please complete and return an application form before the end of March (and sooner if possible). Forms are available from Becky ([becky.edmonds@gtcc.org.uk](mailto:becky.edmonds@gtcc.org.uk)) and will be available from our website

([www.gtcc.org.uk](http://www.gtcc.org.uk)) from mid-January. Anyone aged 18 or over can volunteer: currently we have approximately 50:50 male and female volunteers from all kinds of background and our oldest volunteer is 78 (so there really is no upper age limit). Short interviews will be held in March and April and training will run through May and early June with Saturday nights starting in mid June.



### Fundraising – help needed!

To enable us to recruit a full time Town Centre Chaplain we will be launching a major fundraising drive in 2009. This is likely to include sponsored and other fundraising events and activities as well as, we hope, some important partnership with other Christian ministries and funding trusts. We hope you and your friends will be willing and able to get involved in this so please watch this space for opportunities to do so.

We are also looking for volunteer fundraisers to help support this work. If you have experience of charity fundraising or even if you don't but would like to help out and learn at the same time please contact Julian Lomas ([julian.lomas@gcc.org.uk](mailto:julian.lomas@gcc.org.uk) or 07802 957938). We'd love to hear from you.

### Prayer

Thank you so much to everyone who continues to pray for Guildford Town Centre Chaplaincy and for Street Angels. We hope that these newsletters give you encouragement that your prayers are being heard and answers. Specific prayer needs for the coming weeks are:

- Praise God for all the divine appointments we have experienced so far when we seem to have just been in the right place at the right time,
- Thank Him for the great reception we have had from the bars and clubs in particular the relationships with the door staff.
- Pray for the nights we are out on duty, that God would send us to those in need and use us as He wants to.
- Pray for our existing team of volunteers, for energy on the late night shifts and for how this sacrifice of time then spills over into the rest of the weekend, and indeed into the following week in terms of family, relationships and work etc.
- Pray for the recruitment we are about to embark on for a second group of Street Angel volunteers in the New Year. Specifically that we will recruit around 50 good volunteers with a heart for this work.
- Also, please pray we will find volunteer fundraisers and that people will respond generously to support the Chaplaincy so that we can commence recruitment of a full time Town Centre before the summer.
- Give thanks for volunteers, funders and everyone faithfully and sacrificially giving of their time and skills to support this work.
- For the Police as they protect and uphold our communities in their work.

### Contact us

Please do contact us for more information or with any queries. You can reach Becky on 07717 876853 or at [becky.edmonds@gtcc.org.uk](mailto:becky.edmonds@gtcc.org.uk) or Julian Lomas on 07802 957938 or at [julian.lomas@gtcc.org.uk](mailto:julian.lomas@gtcc.org.uk) or you can visit our website at [www.gtcc.org.uk](http://www.gtcc.org.uk)