

northampton.jesuscentre.org.uk



*help us
to help them
to start again*



“
While sleeping rough in a squat I had a kettle of boiling water thrown over my head, neck and shoulders. After I came out of the burns unit I was drinking heavily and found it hard to keep my hospital appointments.

Pete ”



“
I was in danger of losing my baby into care because I had nowhere to live.

Laura ”



we need a Jesus Centre in Northampton



Rob had been living on the streets for three years. When he heard that his mum had died he was too ashamed to go to the funeral in his street clothes. He came to the Jesus Centre and we fitted him up with a suit and shoes. The night before the funeral they were stolen while Rob slept. He came back, distressed and we kitted him out again.

Jesus Centres are being established in major towns and cities of the UK to show the Christian gospel in action. Our aim is to be a "one-stop-shop" providing a single friendly first point of contact for those in spiritual, social or practical need. All kinds of people may benefit from the facilities and services offered, regardless of their own faith or background. Visitors to Jesus Centres will

find an understanding and non-judgmental attitude from everyone involved.

Indeed, one of the strengths of the project is that many of the staff themselves have experienced life on society's margins.

We have carried out extensive local research to ensure that the Jesus Centre meets real needs in the area without duplicating services already being provided by other organisations, so that we can really help people like Rob.

Of Northampton's 197,000 population

- *3,837 are unemployed*
- *5,370 claim disability living allowance*
- *692 are registered drug users*
- *1,446 need immediate access to temporary emergency accommodation each year*
- *34,779 are pensioners*
- *1,500 are asylum seekers*
- *15,760 are lone parents*



“
*It's a good idea.
Helped me in
some ways. It
keeps people off
the streets.*

John ”



“
*The staff do a good
job to support
people. They do a
lot of work for
drug addicts.*

Robin ”



getting started

The Northampton Jesus Centre opened its doors in July 2001, in the form of a small "pilot project." Operating from a shop unit in Lower Mounts, adjoining the old Cannon Cinema on Abington Square, it provides help and referral for those seeking emergency accommodation, clothing, blankets and a limited menu of low cost food and drink.

As well as offering a small-scale version of some of the services that will be available when we open the full Jesus Centre in the cinema building, the pilot project, although very limited in space, has given opportunity for volunteers to be trained and has provided valuable further insight into the needs of the Northampton area.

The 48m² unit houses an information point and a counselling room downstairs and a

coffee shop, WC and "wash and brush-up" area upstairs. The coffee shop is open in the mornings and in the afternoons we use the room for a variety of group activities. So far, these have included guitar lessons, computer skills and numeracy classes, assertiveness courses and informal English sessions for asylum seekers. Such constructive and educational activities help visitors to gain confidence while counteracting the demotivating effect of hanging around with nothing to do.

Through the work of the pilot project, we have been able to build excellent relationships with other social agencies. This means that when the Jesus Centre moves into its new premises, we will really be able to 'hit the ground running.'



Alex, Craig, Dave and Ricky are all homeless. They come to the Jesus Centre regularly. At first they were withdrawn, but bit by bit they have opened up and become chatty and friendly. They consider the Centre as their drop-in.

Becky had just been discharged from a psychiatric unit. Her grandparents were arriving from Holland in two days time to take her home with them. Because she wasn't looking for permanent accommodation the other agencies couldn't help her. We were able to offer her two nights board and lodging, free of charge in one of the Jesus Fellowship's community houses.

Bill is 62 years old. Brought up in children's homes and then moving from one building site to another whilst working, he has never had a home in his life. Together with CAN we are encouraging and supporting him to leave the streets and take on his very first home.

Jane, a single mum and a volunteer at the Jesus Centre, has come off benefits and gone back to work having built up her confidence through working a shift with us and taking advantage of the CLAIT course.



“
The staff are helpful and have always got ears to listen to you. I spend every day here - they don't kick you out. You can come here for something to eat and drink - the prices are good. I have met a lot of people who have become good friends. You don't have to believe in God to come here. The staff are caring but don't force you to talk. I like it here.

Kelly ”



The main Northampton Jesus Centre is to open around the end of 2003. The former Cannon Cinema will be turned into a multi-purpose Church Centre with rooms available for hire as well as being used regularly by the local Jesus Fellowship congregation. The much larger premises will provide attractive and spacious accommodation for the services already on offer and enable us to do a great deal more.

The Jesus Fellowship Church has set up the Jesus Army Charitable Trust (JACT) to run Jesus Centres across the UK. The Heartcry appeal was launched by the JACT to fund the setting up and running of these Centres.

how much will it cost?

The Northampton Jesus Centre costs around £11,000 per year to run in its present limited accommodation. When the full Jesus Centre opens around the end of 2003,

this is expected to increase to £400,000 per year. Half of this should be covered by lettings and other income.

The disused Cannon Cinema has been purchased by the JACT on a long term ground lease. The price of the building combined with the cost of refurbishment and development will total approximately £3,500,000. In addition, furniture and equipment will be required at another £500,000.

the next step

the Drop-In

a range of facilities for disadvantaged people will be provided from the "Drop-in." Here our visitors will find a comfortable lounge and dining area where they can feel able to relax in a friendly and welcoming environment.

food and drink

a basic menu of healthy hot and cold food will be available.

laundry

washing and drying facilities for clothes and bedding.

shower

secondhand clothing and blankets

lockable storage facility
an acute need of homeless people is a safe place to temporarily leave personal belongings while they attend appointments such as benefits appraisals and job interviews.

listening

a confidential active listening service will be provided offering friendship, encouragement and help with relationships.

creative activities

to help alleviate boredom and sustain progress, the drop-in lounge will provide board games, crosswords and arts and crafts sessions.

hairdressing

a low cost haircut will be available by arrangement.

Rather than advocating a "hand out" culture, we seek to nurture a sense of self respect by making a small charge for certain goods and services provided. Food and drinks at the drop-in will therefore be priced at an appropriate rate to cover the costs involved.

community café

the Jesus Centre café will be open to all, offering a healthy menu of good quality, reasonably-priced meals, hot and cold snacks and drinks. The café will be the base for other community activities.

meeting rooms

as well as providing a meeting place for the Jesus Fellowship Church, rooms of various sizes within the Jesus Centre will provide a venue for groups of people who would like to get together regularly, for example, mums & toddlers, asylum seekers and the long term unemployed.

training suite

a wide range of training opportunities is envisaged, including literacy, numeracy, managing on a low budget, cookery, social skills, interview training, personal development & assertiveness, music and English for speakers of other languages. We have made provision for a crèche facility, visible from the training suite, so that single parents will be able to access any of the courses on offer.

chapel / reading room

the chapel will provide a quiet area for reading and undisturbed thought and reflection.

information technology suite

the fully equipped IT suite, also adjacent to the crèche, will be accessible on an appointment basis. Here, people who perhaps have no other opportunity to make use of IT equipment will be able to do word processing, access the Internet and send and receive e-mails. Staff and volunteers will be on hand to give help as needed.

lettings

larger sized fully equipped conference rooms will be available to let in order to raise funds for the Jesus Centre's charitable activities.

christian fellowship and spiritual support

Jesus Centre staff will not impose their faith on visitors but spiritual support with a Christian emphasis will be available on request.



“It is impossible to believe you have value as a human being if the only people who care for you are paid to do it.”

Crisis Centre, Bristol



an initiative of the modern JESUS army

how you can help

You can help us to help others by making a generous donation, all kinds of donations can be used:

Cash donations

However small (or big!), these can be sent to Heartcry Appeal, address below. Cheques should be payable to Jesus Army Charitable Trust.

Donations on the Net

For making donations on the Net visit our website at gifts.jesuscentre.org.uk

Legacies and wills

For information on this special form of giving, phone 0845 166 8174 or write to us for details.

Furniture and equipment

We'll need office equipment and furniture, lounge furniture, catering and laundry equipment, medical equipment, wash room fittings - we can use just about anything! (Please ring or write if you'd like to be sent a full list of what we need.) If you can help with any item, we can arrange to collect it.

Food

Regular donations of short-dated or end-of-day throw away food will be gratefully received.

Council of Reference

ANDY DICKSON
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