

Keria's story 3 years in Transitions

Hi, my name is Keria, I'm 13 years old and I am in Year 9. I have been doing groups and activities with the Transitions Programme since I was in Year 6. I have done the Transfer Programme, Year 7 Club, Year 8 group and residential, the Healthy Living Course, helped out doing presentations at big events and now I am a Buddy to four Year 6 girls. Earlier this year I helped make a DVD about children's views, then we presented it to lots of people at a conference. I really enjoyed doing that.

More confident, trying new things

Before I started doing the activities with the Transitions Programme I was very very shy, I didn't talk to people much and I would never try new things because I was too scared. Now I am lots more

confident and my behaviour has changed toward the things I do. I have learnt to try new things even if I feel scared or nervous because I know I could have so much more fun if I try. Because I've given things a try I have found that I can stand up in front of people and read aloud, which I have done many times now. I still get nervous but I will try.

The Transitions Programme has helped me to feel ok about working in groups and get used to talking to and working with people who aren't my friends. It has given me lots of new experiences and it has given me confidence that I didn't have before.



Programme activities

Under 5s Programme

- *Playgroup (Mon, Wed, Fri)
- *Parent & toddler groups (Tue, Thu)
- *Parent and baby groups (Wed)

Young Parents Programme

- *Antenatal / new mums groups (Tue)
- *Parenting group (Wed)
- *Various accredited courses (Thu)
- Home visits & 1:1 work (inc. mental health support and counselling)

Aspire Programme

- *Social groups (Mon, Thu)

Transitions Programme

- Transfer Programme, 1:1 work and groups in 11 schools
- *Coleridge Yr 7 groups (Tue, Wed)

Social Inclusion Programme

- *Vocational Group (Tue, Thu)
- *Urban music (Tue x2, Thu)
- *Dance groups (Thu, Fri)
- *1:1 work with young women
- *Open mic nights (music)
- Football, gym, motor mechanics & DJ groups
- 1:1 & vocational work

All Programmes

- Trips and residentials
- *occurs in the Centre

A week in the life of Romsey Mill


To give you a flavour of the rich tapestry of activity at Romsey Mill, please see left for details of the range of our programmes, and below for usage of the Centre by others as a thriving community resource. If you would like to hire halls or rooms in the Centre, particularly over the summer holiday, please contact the office for more details.

Other groups using the Centre, mostly on evenings, weekends and in school holidays include:

- Over 60s social group
- Martial arts / Capoeira
- Circus skills
- Dance Offensive (partnership)
- Church youth groups
- Cam-mind, Cameo & Romsey Mill music group (partnership)
- JAM: children's club (partnership with churches)
- Indian dancing
- Language schools
- Training sessions
- Singing group
- Dance company

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If you already search the web, you could raise money in the process without it costing you a penny! www.everyclick.com gives money to charity each time it is used. All you have to do is register with them once at www.everyclick.com, tell them you'd like to support Romsey Mill as your chosen charity, and then every time you use their search engine they will make a donation to us. If you go to many online shops through the links on Everyclick, the shops will donate to us too!



E-feedback

Thank you for signing up to receive this first ever e-version of Mill News. We would value your feedback and suggestions. Please send them to marie.nazombe@romseymill.org.

Pass it on

If you like this version, please encourage your fellow supporters to sign up for e-news too!



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MILL NEWS Summer 2007

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At the service of dedication, Archbishop Sentamu spoke about lives which have become 'messed up'. Like a torch stuffed with ribbons their shine can be inhibited if they are filled with the wrong things.

Dedication Events

Archbishop's blessing

The fantastic redevelopment of Romsey Mill Centre could not go unmarked! We therefore held events on 29th May to show the facilities to the community, and to dedicate them and our continuing work to God, thanking Him for His provision.

We were honoured to be joined by the Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, who himself spent several years in Cambridge. Two young people took the Archbishop on an interactive tour of the facilities, during which he and 200 other invited guests, including local supporters and the Mayor of Cambridge, met some of the young people and families with whom we work, and viewed displays of our activities.

'Un-messed... connected... free'

Exuding warmth and humour, Dr Sentamu dedicated the building and praised the work, saying;

"Christ came to make sure that our lives, which are eternally messed up, become un-messed, become connected, become the kind of life that shines. But when that light shines we have a responsibility. And that's why Romsey Mill is wonderful – looking out for those who are marginalised... who need to be given opportunities ... to begin to live free as God intended."

Open evening

Visitors to the open evening included those new to Romsey Mill and those who have known it from its conception, and the building since before that - all of whom enjoyed the opportunity to see the changes first-hand, and to get a flavour of our work from the displays and from talking to staff, trustees and patrons.



Staff member James Bennett; Charlie Harris from the Rank Foundation (trust fund); and Romsey Mill Patron, Bishop Anthony of Ely, talk about the Social Inclusion Programme at the dedication event.



To live is to change

One of Romsey Mill's Trustees recently shared with me her observation that "the Mill never has a quiet period". I can confirm that this has been our experience over the last few months! This summer edition of Mill News highlights a number of exciting events and some significant changes that we have experienced.

The day-time and evening dedication events, attended by over 250 people, were very positive opportunities to 'present' the

building and our work. Thank you to all of you who were able to come along. The trip to Parliament by a group of young women who are part of our Social Inclusion Programme was also a particular high spot (see opposite).

The changes we have experienced include developments within our programme work (see the items on Progressions and Romsey Terriers) and also within the staff team who support and enable that work. As we say our "goodbyes" to Robin and Sharon, I want to thank them both for their part in the life of

Romsey Mill. We pray that they would know God's best for their futures.

It has been said that 'change always comes bearing gifts'. As we see some staff moving on, others are arriving. As certain opportunities within our work come to an end others are opening up along the way. As you read this edition of Mill News I hope you will sense something of the momentum taking the work forward and will continue to support us on our exciting journey.

Neil Perry, CEO

Staff on the move

After 9 years at the Mill it is time to say a fond farewell to Senior Development Worker, **Robin Barden**. Of late, he has been shifting his focus here more towards the supervision and training of students and is now looking to become more involved in teaching youth work. Robin says, "To all those I have known during my time at Romsey Mill I would like to take this



L to R: Neal Wilcox and Robin Barden

opportunity to wish you all God's blessings for the future."

Sharon Whittle has been with us part-time since September 2006, developing the vocational work at The Netherhall School. She now wants to give more time to developing a youth group in her home village of Linton.



Sharon Whittle

After a positive final year student placement here, **Neal Wilcox** has been offered a full-time SIP post, following a successful interview. Neal will take over Sharon's vocational work and take forward other SIP work in the south of the city.

YPP Progressions Worker Emily Grant helps a young mum with her CV.



Progressions

Since March 2007, we have been developing our work with young parents in the area of progression from Romsey Mill groups into the community. This involves helping young parents to identify their hopes and desires for the future and supporting them in making these a reality.

Examples of such support include: accompanying nervous young parents to other local groups, offering careers advice, enabling access to childcare funding, assisting with writing CVs, searching for suitable courses and jobs, and liaising with colleges.

Ten parents will start college in September, and three others will do shorter external courses, including 'Entry to Employment'.

We asked Becca Palombo, a young mother who plans to start a course at Cambridge Regional College this September, about her experiences at Romsey Mill.

► *How did you get involved?*

Connexions sent me a letter about a year ago and it had an article about Romsey Mill in it. I got in contact with Romsey Mill and they said I was more than welcome to come along.

► *What have you been involved in at Romsey Mill?*

I have been to the Baby group on a Wednesday and the classes on a Thursday (English and Healthy Living).

► *How has the Young Parents Programme supported you?*

This programme has been very helpful and supported me by

believing in me and helping me further my education.

► *How has the Progressions Worker supported you?*

Emily has really helped me to build my self confidence, and with interview techniques. She also arranged for me to see careers advisers and arranged college interviews. Without her help I don't think I would be in the position I am in now.

► *What are you planning to do at College and in the future?*

When I go to college I am planning to do Access to Nursing so I can go on and hopefully become a midwife.

Becca Palombo with her 3-yr-old daughter



FACT FILE: Asperger Syndrome

Autism affects the way a person communicates and relates to the people around them. Autism is called a 'spectrum condition' because the term covers a number of different conditions, including Asperger syndrome.

Characteristics include:

- **difficulty in communicating** (e.g. may sound over-precise or over-literal. Jokes, exaggerated language, turns of phrase and metaphors can cause problems)
- **difficulty in social relationships** (e.g. not fully understanding gestures, facial expressions or tone of voice, so can appear aloof or indifferent to others)
- **a lack of social imagination** and creative play (e.g. often excelling at learning facts and figures but finding it hard to think in abstract ways)

People with Asperger syndrome often

- have average or above average intelligence
- develop an almost obsessive interest in a hobby
- find change upsetting, so often have repetitive behaviour patterns and a need for routine
- are, sadly, a target for teasing or bullying at school.

Source: National Autistic Society website: www.nas.org.uk



Volunteers and young people alike have fun at Aspire!

Romsey Terriers (SIP)

Final season over

After three very successful years the Romsey Terriers Football team played its last game in May. There have been many highlights such as getting to the cup final of the Cambridge Churches League in their first season and going on football tour to Prague, but the most significant one is that they have developed as individuals. For the first time in three years all of the team are either employed or attending college. Three will leave Cambridge in September to start at university.

Enthusiasm, determination, passion

As a team they have been a credit to themselves and have played football with real enthusiasm, determination and passion. It was unfortunate that they were not able to finish on a high by winning the cup as they were beaten in the semi-final by the eventual winners. They have made a vital contribution to Romsey Mill and should be very proud of their achievements.

James Bennett



Did you know?

- An estimated 588,000 people have autism in the UK (about 1 in 100). Of these 133,500 are children under 18
- 21% of children with an autistic spectrum disorder have been excluded from school
- It is thought that Cambridge is an Asperger Syndrome 'hotspot' – with perhaps more like 1 in 50 people with the condition
- Our 'Aspire' social clubs allow young people to communicate on a level that they feel comfortable with, in an environment where their condition is understood and catered for.

Source: www.nas.org.uk

Aspire to volunteer?

To develop our volunteer base for the Aspire programme we are looking for committed people who are interested in working with young people who have Asperger syndrome at our weekly clubs. Experience is not necessary as training will be given! To find out more please email Ruth Woods on ruth.woods@romseymill.org or ring her on 07795 315700.

Trip to Parliament (SIP)

The planned trip to Parliament with a group of young women in Year 10 went ahead in May. The young women had a tour around the houses of



parliament and then met with MP David Howarth in one of the committee rooms to talk about issues facing young women like themselves in the Kings Hedges area. Not intimidated by their grand surroundings, the group confidently and openly expressed their concerns to the MP. Pointing out that there isn't a space for young people to go to just be themselves in their area, the young women presented an idea of starting up a community café. They felt listened to by Mr Howarth, who encouraged them to take forward their ideas with his full backing.

J-Team Holiday Club: Could you help?

We are looking for volunteers to help at a fun-filled week (23-27 July) for children aged 5-11. If you would like to help for some or all of the week please e-mail admin@romseymill.org or ring the office on 01223 213162.