

Newsletter No. 1 – September 2018

## Guild Partnership Project to Tackle Loneliness and Social Isolation in Scotland

Dear Friends,

You, the Guild Members, and we, CrossReach, know that there are an increasing number of individuals across Scotland who are or feel isolated and lonely. We already encounter them in our social care services and offer support where we can. But we also know that many others remain hidden from view. We need first to identify these others and reach out to them if we are to offer support and companionship to everyone who feels lonely and abandoned. And we need your help to do this. That's why our project bears the title "Join Up the Dots", and that's why your theme this year of 'Seeking the Way' is so apt for this initial phase of the Project.



One of the best ways to uncover a problem which remains hidden is to get people talking about it. And you, rooted in your local communities, are best placed to get people talking about loneliness. Get people talking with the help of cakes and your skills in baking and decorating them. We invite you to bake cakes which are grey on the outside but colourful on the inside. Mental ill-health often results from loneliness or isolation.

A CrossReach Grey Cake symbolises what it might feel like to be affected by mental health problems. A person's true colour (unique talents, interests and aspirations), hidden by a dull grey fog of anxiety or depression.

"I think...as Christians within the Church, we simply get alongside folk in much the same way as Jesus did. He got alongside people and he let them tell their story."  
Very Rev. Dr. Derek Browning, former Moderator of the General Assembly

Our Grey Cakes Toolkit contains all you need to hold a Grey Cake Bake Sale, Bring and Buy or Competition - from unique recipes to handy tips on how to encourage everyone to get involved and how to publicise the event widely.

We know from our pioneers who have already held an event that it provokes rich conversation, often touching on feeling isolated or lonely. We want you to share these conversations and stories with us.

To order your toolkit, please contact Fiona Sutherland by e-mail: [supporters@crossreach.org.uk](mailto:supporters@crossreach.org.uk) or by telephone: 0131 454 4374.



We have been delighted by the response to the Join Up the Dots Project from individual Guilds and Presbyteries up and down the land and look forward to meeting many of you at talks over the coming weeks and months. If you would like to book a talk, then please contact Fiona Sutherland, as above.

Join  
up the  
Dots



From the talks we have already given, we know that many of you want to know what your fundraising will achieve. We want to be ambitious in the support we provide for those who are socially isolated and lonely and, as already explained, for that we need your evidence, gathered by holding a Grey Cake Event or otherwise, to ensure the widest-reaching impact. But for the people we encounter already in our services who are lonely and isolated, we need your fundraising skills right now:

### **To start brand new Guild-supported initiatives to tackle loneliness and isolation in early, adult and senior citizen years.**

Hold weekly toddler groups for parents of a child with complex needs. A parent dealing with a disability or significant health condition may well feel abandoned by those who do not understand what they are going through. A year's worth of toddler groups would cost around £10,000.

Expand our Befriending Initiative in Inverness to combat loneliness among those returning to their own homes having recovered from substance use. We want to work with more partners who encounter this problem, including Church of Scotland congregations.

Run more initiatives like WOW at Whinnieknowe (pictured above), creating opportunities for senior citizens in our homes to relive the joys of youth through visits from primary school-aged children.

### **And to develop further previous Guild-supported initiatives which are going from strength to strength.**

Run crèche sessions in our Perinatal Counselling Services so that mothers, and fathers, who might feel isolated and alone in their community can bring their baby with them rather than have to find childcare. It costs approximately £720 to provide a full course of weekly counselling sessions with crèche for one Mum and her baby.

Increase the provision of advice and support offered by our staff and volunteers from Perth Prison Visitors Centre at the Sheriff Court. It is often at this stage of the justice system that families can feel most isolated. To move to a weekly service at the Court would cost nearly £3,000 a year.

Put on more Heart for Art Exhibitions to showcase the talent of our Heart for Art participants in prominent galleries and public spaces. This is vital to raise awareness of the existing groups and, for some visitors, provides the inspiration to set up their own local group.

Thank you for supporting our project and all the other projects in this funding cycle.



The Church of Scotland  
Social Care Council

Operating as CrossReach, Scottish Charity No: SC011353

