

## CrossReach Christmas Angel Appeal

### Be a Guardian Angel this Christmas

#### Mary's Story:

"I'd had a rough pregnancy and a traumatic labour."

"I became incredibly depressed, weepy, anxious and beset by suicidal thoughts. I didn't feel like I knew what I was doing with my daughter. I stopped leaving my house, and became obsessed with my daughter – I never put her down, and was not happy unless I was holding her. I withdrew from my husband emotionally, and refused to talk about any of my thoughts or feelings for fear of being seen as a failure."

Mental illness is the leading cause of maternal death in the UK

Many mothers and fathers across Scotland may feel the same way this Christmas. 2 in 5 parents experience significant emotional difficulties during pregnancy and early parenthood. Mental illness is the leading cause of maternal death in the UK with 1 in 7 deaths being from suicide. Stigma often prevents parents asking for help.

And help is hard to come by. Scarcely half of the GP practices in Scotland have any formal training in mental health issues in pregnancy and immediately after.

We are determined to keep our services free for those who most need our support

CrossReach is there when others aren't. We helped Mary and her daughter and we help many other families just like hers. Mary finally referred herself to CrossReach when her daughter was 3 months old. Even then, she found the path to support hard: "at the worst point of the depression, I would have used any valid excuse to avoid going to therapy".

For Mary, the fact that we have dedicated crèche facilities at our centres was vitally important. "I was so anxious about being apart from my daughter that the idea of attending an hour's therapy session without her gave me incapacitating panic attacks. So were the crèche not available or if there was any hint of financial pressure, I would have self-sabotaged and who knows what would have happened."

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We help but we need your help too. As Mary told us: "we don't have a lot of money, but I contributed a small amount each month." Others may not be able to afford anything at all. CrossReach is determined that no one should be turned away from the help they seek through their individual circumstances.

Our specialist ante- and postnatal (PND) counselling centres and all our other services to the community reach out to families exactly where and when they need that extra bit of support, love and care.



See over for details of how you can become a Guardian Angel



It costs between £40 and £60 to provide a one hour session of professional therapeutic support for an individual, group or family.

Someone with PND will attend an average 12 sessions of therapy.

### **Whose Guardian Angel will you be?**

We spend a total of almost £2m annually in running our community-based services for children and families. Every year we rely on financial gifts from generous supporters to provide life-transforming love and care. This year we are looking to raise an additional £200,000 so that people like Mary can be given the support they need.

CrossReach is the Church of Scotland's charity. It is your charity. We know you support us with your prayers and we feel upheld in our work by these. Please build on that support by making a donation and become a "guardian angel" for people like Mary.

### **Choose your gift**

Choose the value of your gift and then send it back to the address below (cheques payable to 'CrossReach'). Or make a bank transfer to our bank account (please provide an identifiable reference), the details for which are:

Bank of Scotland, Sort Code: 80-41-21, Account No.: 00227186

### **Send your message of hope**

Whether you choose to send us a gift or not, we invite you to fill in your message of hope or a prayer to those like Mary on the back of the angel cut-out and return to us. All completed angels will be added to the decorations this Christmas in all our services and support offices for staff and users of our services alike to read and ponder in their heart.

### **And what became of Mary and her daughter?**

Mary's daughter is now 16 months' old and is "happy and thriving". Mary herself is "secure and confident as a parent and as a person". "I cannot think what would have happened to me, and my daughter, had I not been able to access CrossReach."

Thank you so much for reading Mary's story and for your support.

Viv Dickenson  
CEO CrossReach

