

# Woodside Starter Packs

**WOODSIDE PARISH CHURCH** has supported our Clifton Road project for several years by donating Starter Packs. Joan McKichan, group treasurer, explains what the scheme involves.

In 2005, Woodside Parish Church became involved in an initiative called Church, Community and Change, one of the objectives of which was to improve the quality of life for people, especially young people, in our local community of Woodside. Working in partnership with Tearfund and receiving a lot of advice and guidance from Scottish Churches Housing Action, a group of ten people from our church decided to set up a Starter Pack Group, which we called "Start-U-Up". A group of this kind was already in operation in Angus to supply the basic household items to people moving from homelessness into their first flat, to help them maintain their tenancy.

We were grateful at the beginning to receive funding from Aberdeen Presbytery, Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland, Tearfund and Aberdeen City Council Regeneration Fund as well as several generous individual donations. In the years since we have held various fundraising events: a stovie and quiz night and two afternoon teas and have also knitted tea cosies which have been sold to church members.

The items for our packs are purchased at one of the large superstores and we provide bedding, crockery, cutlery, towels, cleaning

materials, kitchen utensils and a kettle - in fact all the small household items needed to start off in a flat of one's own. The recipients of our packs are moving into the Woodside area and are referred to us by the city's homeless unit, Langstane Housing, Aberdeen Foyer and most frequently Aberdeen Cyrenians, for their Clifton Road Project when their young people move into a flat of their own. We have recently delivered our 114th Starter Pack.

The work of our group involves the skills of a project co-ordinator/secretary, a treasurer and a shopping co-ordinator and others in the group help to pack the items into empty boxes which we have been grateful to receive from Somebody Cares. Packs are then delivered to the referrer. We welcome feedback about the items we provide and so far seem to be meeting the requirements of those referred to us and hopefully improving their quality of life as was the original aim.

Although ours was the first Starter Pack Group in this area, other churches in the city are now supporting people in different parts of Aberdeen. We wish them every success with this worthwhile work and hope they find it as rewarding as we do.

## Supermarket support for our Burns nights

**VARIOUS ABERDEEN CYRENIANS PROJECTS** held Burns Suppers thanks to the support of Asda, Sainsbury's and Tesco who donated all the essentials.

The Street Alternatives one at Summer Street also included themed games. Pictured are all the ingredients for a memorable evening:

- haggis supper with oatcakes
- poem
- our 'pin the rose on Rabbie' game
- box of chocolates for the prize
- our Burns supper quiz



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NEWSLETTER

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*The contents of a typical Aberdeen Cyrenian food parcel.*



# Heat or eat

**THE DEMAND FOR FOOD PARCELS** at Aberdeen Cyrenians' Head Office premises in Summer Street has become an accurate indicator of how people are coping with the welfare reform measures and rising costs.

With a 12% rise in gas and electricity prices last year, many service users are struggling to cope financially on a weekly benefit income of approximately £67. After £10 is spent on gas, £10 on electricity, council tax water and sewage rates of £5, TV licence and debt repayment plans, there is very little money left to buy food. It really is heat or eat for many people.

Aberdeen Cyrenians' Street Alternatives service, which provides meals for homeless people four times a week and has a constant supply of food parcels made up of donated items, has become a lifeline for many who simply would go hungry without the service. People's benefits often stretch to cover heating costs but not to food costs.

As recently as 2011, the demand for food parcels was about five a week but now the figure is nearer to five at each of the nine drop-in sessions a week, totalling approximately 200 a month.

The majority of drop-in service users come to Aberdeen Cyrenians asking for food assistance but that is just the tip of the iceberg, according to Lynsey Allan, depute manager of the Advice, Information and

When service users present with issues in relation to heating, it allows Advice and Information workers to contact external agencies on their behalf. To this end, Aberdeen Cyrenians has been working with SCARF, an agency which can help with energy efficiency advice.

Another important issue Lynsey and her team are dealing with at the moment is benefit sanctions and this can impact on the demand for food parcels and attendance at the Street Alternatives sessions. "Benefit sanctions are causing people real problems. Sometimes sanctions are applied to a claimant for two weeks but sometimes the sanctions can be in place for years. This happens when the claimant fails to meet the criteria for the benefit they are receiving," Lynsey said.

This became particularly noticeable when the welfare reforms were introduced and claimants were asked to attend medical appointments to assess their fitness for work. Lynsey went on to say "Many people we previously supported were found to be 'fit for work' - people with anxiety or depression or substance misuse issues. These issues make it difficult for people to find employment or sustain employment but these people were now being deemed 'fit for work'.

"If these people lose their appeal against these decisions, they will be directed to claim Job Seekers Allowance."

Lynsey's experience is that many people are not in a position to do this or meet the criteria of Job Seekers Allowance i.e. being able to actively seek work and available to attend appointments, due to their ongoing chaotic lifestyles. As long as people are failing to meet these criteria, they will continue to have benefit sanctions imposed. "People get 40% of their benefit amount if they qualify for hardship and this is to pay for all outgoings. This is impossible to do and therefore, people fall behind on any payment plan they may have set up," she added.

Support team. "Through word of mouth, many people are aware that we give out food parcels but they do not realise that they can also access assistance with debt issues, assistance to contact energy companies to reduce payments and other housing issues," she said.

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# 50 miles, one night to see the city in a new light

ABERDEEN CYRENIANS is one of the charities with guaranteed places at this year's Edinburgh Night Ride.

First  
Edinburgh  
Night Ride  
2013



Now in its second year, the magical moonlit ride will see up to 500 cyclists set out from Holyrood Park on a 50 mile route around some of the capital's most iconic sights including the Royal Mile, the castle, the Scott Monument, Arthur's Seat and the Royal Observatory.

The ride starts at 11pm on Saturday, June 21 - the longest day and shortest night of the year - and the route will incorporate some fantastic night riding, according to the organisers, Global Adventure Challenges. The Edinburgh Night Ride took place for the first time last year and attracted about 100 participants. It was judged such a huge success that the unique charity challenge has been brought back for 2014, only bigger and better.

It costs £39 to register and the fee is non-refundable. There is also a requirement to raise at least £160 for your chosen

charity. Our first sign-up is former Street Alternatives volunteer Kenny Gillanders who now lives in London. You can sponsor him at <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/KennyGillanders>.

The event is being organised by Global Adventure Challenges who have been successfully operating worldwide Charity Challenge events since 2000, helping many charities throughout the UK raise substantial funds. Over the years, they have taken thousands of individuals on adventures all over the world, helping them to realise their dreams and fulfil ambitions, whilst raising literally millions of pounds for UK and Irish registered charities.

The Edinburgh Night Ride event crew will be made up of experienced challenge leaders and cycling event professionals. There will be marshalled checkpoints where first aid and refreshments such as snack bars, fruit and water will be available. Their qualified and experienced event crew will follow the participants to ensure everyone's continued safety.

For more information go to <http://www.edinburgh-nightride.com/index.html> or to register to support Aberdeen Cyrenians, go to <https://www.globaladventurechallenges.com/booking/?id=3367&d=ENR14062014&r=1&charity=4812&charity=4925>

## Greetings and goodbye from Damir

*One of our Chevron volunteers, Damir Mikulek, has relocated to Houston and therefore won't be volunteering with Street Alternatives any longer. He sent us this message:*

"The few years I spent in Aberdeen and my visits to Aberdeen Cyrenians during the past three years will always remain in a very special place in my memory. While I was trying to make myself of most use (staying well clear of any cooking duties - service users would not appreciate my "remarkable" cooking skills) my every visit was a stark reminder of how lucky we all are, who at the end of the shift go to our homes and our families, as opposed to

the less lucky ones who face the rough sleep on the street every night.

"I immensely enjoyed working at Aberdeen Cyrenians and interacting with both the service users and the staff and it saddens me that I could not have made it down to the centre to say a proper goodbye as planned. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to wish everybody at the centre a prosperous 2014 and all the best in the future on both the private and the business plan. I also wish the Aberdeen Cyrenians to remain successful in being the home away from home and a friend to lend a hand to all those less lucky ones until the luck again knocks on their door."

We are looking for donations of warm coats and jackets, particularly smaller sizes, heavy shoes and boots and gents gloves. You can hand these in at our Summer Street reception any time.

Wernham House is always happy to receive unwanted DVDs.

# Rise in payroll giving participants



ACROSS THE UK, payroll giving rose dramatically in the last financial year as the scheme's worth to charities increased from £37 million to £155 million. That's a 39 per cent increase in participants making use of the tax-free method of donating to charity.

More than one million people are now signed up to payroll giving, which was originally set up in 1987, compared to just 732,000 in 2012.

Please think about payroll giving as a way to support Aberdeen Cyrenians. It's a simple and tax-effective way to help. You decide how much you want to give every week or month by completing the form at the bottom of this page, and then ask your payroll department to deduct your donation from your pay at source.

Peter O'Hara, managing director of Workplace Giving, said that no single factor could be credited with the rise of payroll giving participation and value, but that many different elements have come into play.

"We have definitely seen more workplaces opening up, and more employees signing up to

the scheme," he said. "The increased number of charities encouraging employees to engage in payroll giving from charities' own websites has likely had an impact, too, and visibility of payroll giving has definitely increased."

HMRC has changed its data collection procedure from quarterly to an annual basis and stated: "Independently of this, some payroll giving agencies have renewed their data systems and this has led to an apparent jump in the number of donors and the gross amount donated."

Or, if you prefer, you can set up a regular gift direct through your bank using the following information:

**Account details: Aberdeen Cyrenians Ltd**  
**Bank: Royal Bank of Scotland, St Nicholas Branch, Aberdeen**  
**Acc No: 0010 3040 / Sort: 83-49-40**

Raise money for Aberdeen Cyrenians every time you shop online with Amazon, M&S, Tesco or 2,700 other retailers. Go to [www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/aberdeencyrenians](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/aberdeencyrenians).

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PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM IN BLOCK CAPITALS AND PASS TO YOUR PAYROLL/HR DEPARTMENT

SURNAME: ..... TITLE: MRS/MR/MISS/MS (Delete as appropriate)

FORENAMES: .....

HOME ADDRESS: .....

..... POST CODE: .....

TELEPHONE NO: HOME ..... WORK: .....

N.I.NUMBER (if known): ..... EMPLOYEE/STAFF NO: .....

EMPLOYER'S NAME: ..... LOCATION (Town) .....

JOB TITLE: ..... DEPARTMENT: .....

AGE (please tick box): 16-25  26-35  36-45  46-55  56 +

WE NEED TO KNOW THE FOLLOWING:

Name & address (if known) of the Charity(ies) you wish to support.	How much do you wish to give?
Aberdeen Cyrenians, 62 Summer Street, Aberdeen, AB101SD	£ : p
	£ : p
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ : p</b>

PER MONTH/WEEK OR OTHER (specify): ..... Are you an existing payroll giver YES/NO

SIGNED: ..... DATE: .....

# Dinner dance in aid of VAW

This year, Aberdeen Cyrenians' Violence Against Women project is being actively supported by local solicitors and estate agents, Raeburn Christie Clark & Wallace. A member of the RCCW explains what this means:


The firm are committed to making a meaningful contribution to the local communities in which they operate and every year their Charity Committee chooses a local cause to dedicate the fruits of their fundraising efforts towards. There are so many opportunities for the firm to get involved and usually the chosen charity is through a colleague at the Firm nominating it because of first-hand experience of the cause.

We are delighted they have chosen to back Aberdeen Cyrenians' Violence against Women project. This project supports vulnerable women of all ages, including children, who have or who are experiencing physical, emotional or sexual abuse.

As part of the fundraising partnership we have opted to host a Dinner Dance. The evening, set to take place on Friday 9th May at the Marcliffe Hotel and Spa, will be filled with a three course dinner, a live auction, a high end raffle and some dancing to round the evening off. Please see the invitation pictured for further details.

In order to raise funds on the night we are seeking sponsorship in the form of donations, auction items or raffle prizes. If you would like to offer your support, please contact Kate Bullock at RCC&W on 01224 332400 for more detailed information regarding tickets and of the sponsorship packages available.

## Dinner & Dance



Raeburn Christie  
Clark & Wallace  
aberdeen.cyrenians.org

**Raeburn Christie  
Clark & Wallace**

### Dinner & Dance

Raising money for  
Aberdeen Cyrenians

(Violence Against Women Project)

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Join us on Friday 9th May 2014 at 7pm  
at The Marcliffe Hotel & Spa, Aberdeen

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£60 per seat or £600 per table of 10

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Black Tie Event

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Please contact Kate Bullock on 01224 651 427  
for reservations or more information

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Raeburn Christie  
Clark & Wallace  
for life & business

aberdeen.cyrenians.org

The next volunteer information session has been confirmed for Wednesday 12th March at 6pm. If you would like to attend and learn more about volunteering opportunities with Aberdeen Cyrenians, please contact louise.nind@aberdeen-cyrenians.org.

# Fit for a 10k challenge?



ONCE AGAIN WE HAVE BEEN FORTUNATE to have been chosen as one of the affiliated charities of the City of Aberdeen Baker Hughes Running Festival. The event will take place on Sunday 18th May and comprises a 10K Race, a 10K wheelchair race, a Schools 2k Race and a Family Fun Run.

We are looking for as many people as possible to get involved to help Aberdeen Cyrenians raise vital funds for supporting vulnerable people in the North East.

Are you up for the challenge? We are looking for runners, walkers and joggers to take part in the races and to fundraise for us. The action starts outside the Beach Ballroom and the 10K route follows a very beautiful, and importantly very flat, loop round the harbour, along the Beach Esplanade and back through the city. In previous years the race has always filled

up and the same is expected this year. So, to avoid disappointment, we would encourage you to sign up speedily.

The Warehouse gym has kindly offered a discounted membership to those taking part in the run and fundraising for us. More information on their city centre facilities, which include cardio vascular machines, fixed weight machines, swimming pool, sauna and steam room, can be seen at [www.thewarehousehealthclub.com](http://www.thewarehousehealthclub.com)

If you would like to get involved in other ways, we are also looking for volunteers to help out on the day, simultaneously as official stewards and unofficial cheerleaders! There are a variety of tasks allocated to

stewards but last year Aberdeen Cyrenians volunteers were lucky enough to land the enviable job of manning the bouncy castle, as well as helping to register participants for the Fun Run.

Finally, there are various opportunities for corporate sponsorship of our team available.

If you are interested in being a participant, a steward or a sponsor and would like more information please contact louise.nind@aberdeen-cyrenians.org or call 01224 625 732.



Baker Hughes participants in 2013

Looking for an easy way to support Aberdeen Cyrenians? Raise money for us every time you shop online with Amazon, M&S, Tesco or 2,700 other retailers. [www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/aberdeencyrenians](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/aberdeencyrenians)

# Meet the first of our Sleepout volunteers

THE RESPONSE TO OUR CORPORATE SLEEPOUT HAS BEEN AMAZING. This month and next month we will introduce you to our teams through their own words. We're also including details of how you can sponsor each team, or donate to the event generally. It takes place overnight on Wednesday April 23 on the roof of the St Nicholas Centre .

## Fiona from MMS

I am doing the Aberdeen Cyrenians Sleepout so I can help this charity highlight the troubles and challenges which are faced by those people who are homeless and have to sleep rough all the time. We all take for granted our warm homes and beds and do not realize what it is actually like not to have somewhere warm to sleep. My expectations from doing the Sleepout are that for one night only away from the comfort of my own bed I can help raise awareness of the plight of homeless people in Aberdeen and also the wonderful work that Aberdeen Cyrenians support workers and volunteers do to try and help support the homeless and disadvantaged in our city.

Comments from colleagues:

*"A great initiative to raise awareness. Good luck and here's hoping for a dry night!" - Anna*

*"All the best. Hope the weather is kind (to the extent that the Aberdeen weather can be kind .....)" Euan*

*"Your venture came as a sharp reminder of how fortunate my family and I are to have a home, a place of safety, warm beds and a roof over our heads; thank you for drawing our attention to this worthy charity and the plight of people not so far from us. We will continue to support it from now on. Wishing you a warm, dry night on your sleep-out." Helen and Family.*

Donate at <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-web/fundraiser/showFundraiserPage.action?userUrl=FionaBendaoud&pageUrl=2>

**mms** | Maclay Murray & Spens LLP

## Katy at the Wood Group

Rachel and I signed up to take part in the sleepout before really knowing much about it. We attended the welcome event to find out more and were not only made to feel extremely welcome by the lovely people from the charity but we also heard from a service user, who shared his story and told us that with the help of the Cyrenians he is no longer homeless. This really touched our hearts and confirmed to us that although it would be a tough night spent sleeping rough, it would be totally worth it if we managed to raise even a small amount of money or awareness for this amazing cause.

Donate at <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-web/fundraiser/showFundraiserPage.action?userUrl=notsleepingbeauties&pageUrl=3>



## Laura at FMC Technologies

Nicola and I are taking part in this fantastic event to help raise awareness and basically encounter, first hand, what less fortunate have to endure on a daily basis.

Donate at <http://www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/NicolaWatson3>

**FMC Technologies**

## Scott & Michael at Sainsbury's

Looking forward to helping the Cyrenians and gaining a greater sense of empathy with those less fortunate who find themselves sleeping rough.

Donate at <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-web/fundraiser/showFundraiserProfilePage.action?userUrl=SainsburysAberdeen&isTeam=true>

**Sainsbury's**

## Mary and Csilla at AGCC

Mary Holland and Csilla Balint from Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce have joined their efforts and motivation in order to support the Aberdeen Cyrenians. Being the enthusiastic members of team Eyes Wide Open, Mary and Csilla will be organising a series of fundraising activities in order to raise money for the charity. In April they will also be joining other teams to sleep out rough on a cold Scottish night and even if this will be a challenging task, the team is delighted to be part of the Sleepout and it is ready to raise awareness of the difficulties that homeless people face in Aberdeen.

Donate at <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-web/fundraiser/showFundraiserPage.action?userUrl=eyeswideopen&pageUrl=2>



## Lynn & Nicola at KCA Deutag

KCA Deutag has a long history of supporting local charities through their charity committee events. We have worked with the Cyrenians in the past and are happy to help them raise awareness and funds for their amazing work in the city by giving up one night in our cosy beds to try and better understand what those less fortunate than us have to endure on a daily basis. Our colleagues and friends are behind us 100% and we really appreciate their generosity.

Donate at <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-web/fundraiser/showFundraiserPage.action?userUrl=LynnMutchNicolaRaeKCAD&pageUrl=2>

**KCA DEUTAG**  
Operating safely, succeeding globally.

## General donations in support of the Sleepout

<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-web/charity/displayEventDetails.action?eventId=16976&charityId=1007581&invocation=evt0050>



John MacLean and Jenny Brown, both of Aberdeen, will be taking part in this year's Swimathon in aid of Aberdeen Cyrenians. They are both keen swimmers and decided to combine the personal challenge of swimming 10km (200 lengths each) with raising money for a local cause which they feel strongly about. The Swimathon is an annual organised sponsored swim which takes place at swimming pools across the country. John and Jenny will be swimming at Portlethen pool on Saturday 22nd March. They have set up a just giving page to raise sponsorship which can be found at [www.justgiving.com/jennyandjohn10kswim](http://www.justgiving.com/jennyandjohn10kswim)