

Easter story taken to 29 primary schools

Our assembly team visited 29 schools with the Easter story this year. "It was an assembly we first used 6 years ago," said Patrick Coad, Engage Primary Schools Worker. "It explains we all have a choice of how we respond to Jesus."

"Then in April, nine schools were treated to a demonstration of Open the Book, in which the team presented the story of Saul on the road to Damascus. It reminds us that no one is too bad for a second chance!"

Please pray that as interest in Open the Book grows, so will the team of volunteers who give up their time to take Bible stories into schools Woking schools.



Easter drama: Pat Hewat and Patrick Coad

The gift that invests in children's futures!

Don't buy your Christmas presents until you have seen the Engage Christmas Gift Scheme leaflet.

It's usually the "thought" that counts when giving a Christmas gift. So, rather than giving an unwanted book, ornament or pair of socks, buy a "virtual gift" from Engage which

will help our work. Engage will send you a certificate recognising each gift for you to give to your family member, friend or loved one.

To receive a copy of the Gift leaflet when it is published please contact the Engage office, as below.

Over to you ...

Do you have a story of how **Engage** is working in schools? Perhaps you volunteer for **Engage** or work in a school. We'd love to hear your news and to consider it for the next issue of **Engagement**. Please send it to the editor, Royer Slater, c/o the email address below.

Engage Woking Schools
St Andrew's Church
Goldsworth Park Centre
Denton Way
Woking
Surrey GU21 3LG

Tel: 01483 762424
Email: office@engagewoking.org
Web: www.engagewoking.org
Engage Woking Schools
Registered charity no. 1156005

ENGAGEMENT

News from Engage Woking Schools

Summer 2016

Farewell Chrissie after 14 years

Chrissie Lacey leaves Engage this summer after being linked with us for 14 years, writes Carolyn Dickins, Trustee. It's hard to imagine a time without her and, speaking to Chrissie recently, it's clear her work and personal life are so entwined she finds it hard to think of life without Engage!

Chrissie first joined us as a gap year worker in 2002, when we were known as SCAt. She assisted with primary and secondary school work. The confident young woman she is now seems a far cry from the young Chrissie who says in those early days she was very homesick and tearful for the first couple of weeks away from home.

But her excitement at being involved in schools work soon outshone those early nerves. "There were only five Youth Workers in Woking at that time", she reflects, "but I loved getting involved with the Christian Unions and assemblies as well as the comradeship of being part of a team".

Some eight months later Chrissie started her degree in *Youth & Community Work & Applied Theology* while taking on a part-time role as Student Youth Worker at Christ Church Woking. She reminisces about those early days of involvement with the Christian Unions at Woking College and Woking High: "I



remember we created a new Christian Union and we had one amazing session studying Revelation and then everyone painted their ideas – there was total silence for an hour: it was amazing!"

Two years later – while still in the final year of her degree – Chrissie joined us in the full time job of Secondary Schools Worker, as well as getting married.

"I guess I have always had a heart for schools ministry. I loved the freedom of working in schools, meeting and talking with young people and really living out the faith, right in there with them".

Chrissie's son Izaak was born in February 2006 and maternity leave

Continued overleaf

Farewell Chrissie (continued)

followed. "Nine months later I was ready to come back" she says, "I knew the job would be different as the Youth Workers had taken on so much. But part of me was missing – I wasn't living out what God wanted me to do." So Chrissie came back part-time, now working with a team of 20 Youth Workers.

Next came a call to Ordination. Chrissie trained for three years alongside her part-time role with Engage. Daughter Phoebe arrived in the midst of this and Chrissie remembers with fondness taking both children with her to the staff room at Woking College for "Cakes at Break". "The staff were as much thrilled to see the children, as to have the cakes!"

It was towards the end of her ordination training that she and Nick Grew worked to develop the role of Pioneer Schools Minister, which Chrissie started straight after ordination.

"It seemed a natural development, as relationships with schools were strong and they trusted us to continue and develop a new role.

"I loved the passion of being out there – being real with people in a more intense way and serving them in whatever way they needed." It included mentoring and being there for staff. Much practical help was needed, whether in a classroom or the canteen. "While hanging out with people you

Chrissie reflects...

"In 14 years I moved out of home, got stuck into schools ministry, met and married Matt, completed two degrees, had two children and was ordained!"

"God has been the thread throughout everything. In the fun, easy, tough, sad, exciting and scary times, I've known God is holding me, behind me, before me and



Mentoring: Chrissie was always happy to help

can see their needs and can try to help them. Sometimes people ask me why I'm so happy to help them and I say 'you are worth it to God so you are worth it to me!'

What will Chrissie miss most? "The community I've become a part of – it will hurt not being with them. I'll miss the Youth Workers and the fun we have and I'll miss the excitement of the conversations about God ... you just don't know where it will lead."

The Trustees and everyone at Engage wish Chrissie God's blessings in her future life and career, and thank her for the blessing she has been to us and to so many people in Woking these past fourteen years.

within me: that's what I've tried to share with those around me. Engage/SCAT has been a passion and a big part of my transformational years.

"I pray that Helen can ride the wave of revival as God's love sweeps compassionately through this town. Bring it on!"

Welcome Helen

Engage welcomes Helen Taylor as our new Secondary Schools Worker. Helen joined us in May 2016 and will shadow Chrissie until she leaves us.

Helen lives in Ottershaw and previously worked as a teaching assistant in a Weybridge secondary school for two and a half years. "I wasn't looking for a new job, but when I saw the job advertised I couldn't let the opportunity pass me by!"

As a teaching assistant Helen not only needed to establish good relationships with students, but also to act as a role model and to be aware of and to respond to individual needs – all essential in her new role with Engage.

She met students informally each week in their lunch time as part of a mentoring program for Year 10 students at risk of not fulfilling their academic potential, to discuss their concerns and progress made. "Showing there's an adult who's supporting them and has time to listen to their concerns proved beneficial to many students," she explained.

"I saw first-hand the lack of Christian input students receive in school so I'm looking forward to working with Engage to bring the Gospel and a Christian presence to the students and young people of Woking."

Helen revealed that although went to Sunday school as a child and church was a part of family life, she stopped attending Church in her teenage years and it wasn't until attending an Alpha course in 2005 that she came to know Jesus as her Saviour. "Through Alpha and particularly during prayer on the Alpha 'away day', I



committed my life to Jesus. I joined the local Baptist church and began my spiritual walk with the Lord."

Helen now attends Christ Church in Woking and has helped with its "Lark in the Park" summer events for the past three years. She was involved in children's work at her previous church in Denmead,

Hampshire, running a weekly after-school club for 7-11 year olds. "I also took a week out of my summer holiday to help run the local 'Churches Together' summer holiday club for 5-11 year olds.

"I believe that God gives us an opportunity to use the gifts that he has given us through different situations in our lives," added Helen. "I'm thankful to Him to have been given this opportunity to serve in Woking's secondary schools as part of the Engage team."

Hello Harriet

Congratulations to our Primary Schools Worker, Patrick Coad and his wife Sophie on the birth of Harriet Grace in February. She has already been to see us in the Engage office!

