

# Caritas Leeds Ambassadors Workshop

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2018- at Wheeler Hall-Leeds



A number of Caritas Leeds Ambassadors attended the above workshop with others expressing an interest but unable to attend (re-scheduled from 27<sup>th</sup>. February).

## **Aims of the workshop were:**

- Feedback from Caritas Leeds Ambassadors
- Presentation on care of Ex-Offenders
- Show casing some Catholic Care projects
- Initiatives from Caritas Leeds
- Support for Caritas Leeds Ambassadors

## **Feedback from Caritas Leeds Ambassadors:**

### **Bradford Deanery:**

- Meeting held and priests and chaplains contacted for volunteers
- Younger Catholics to be encouraged to be involved especially through the secondary school in the area
- Difficulties in communication both within parishes and between parishes
- Sense of Church in this deanery is needed due to isolation of individual parishes
- Church not always welcoming
- Good work is being done but it is spread out very thin
- Proposal to have a Bradford Caritas Group inviting at least one member from each parish to attend including one young person
- Identified a next meeting

### **Harrogate Deanery:** Reported highlights from a written report

- One meeting took place with two lay faithful and priest school chaplain
- Challenges in contacting all the parishes within the deanery
- Initial contact has been made with the priest chaplain for the secondary school in the area
- Youth minister at St Robert's parish
- Lenten project to raise funds for a specific project
- Various groups (St Aelred) to focus on needs of asylum seekers
- St Joseph supports at least 70 orphans in a parish in Kenya
- St Mary's have various groups such as SVP, youth, elderly links with overseas parishes

### **Wakefield Deanery:** No report or representation

### **Huddersfield Deanery:**

- 5 people from three parishes formed a group including a school lay chaplain
- Various specific projects such food bank, SVP, asylum seekers, working with other denominations
- Provision for youth in the parishes and outside the school context is disappointing
- Need for regular daytime social gathering for retired men is needed
- Need a focus on recently released prisoners
- Areas where expertise is required in mental health, dementia, bereavement

### **Leeds North Deanery:**

- Our Lady of Kirkstall started a home-work club specifically targeting children of asylum seekers to help with literacy etc. and enhance potential
- Not currently extending to get other parishes in the deanery involved

### **Leeds East Deanery:** Report given by Lay School Chaplain who attended this workshop

- No meetings have been organised at either parish or deanery level
- 'Faith in Action' is a good link between schools and parishes
- SVP-BeAttitudes group has been set up
- Schools need to know what specific projects can be supported to involve the younger generation in social action
- Inter-generational project

### **Keighley/Skipton Deanery:**

- Met in January. 3 people including a school lay chaplain
- Good links with secondary school and the 'Good Shepherd Centre'
- Need to raise parishioners awareness of social action across the Diocese
- Make better use of the Parish, Home, School triangle
- Geographical challenges of this deanery
- Parish councils could be a forum for encouraging best practice for social action
- 'Keighley Catholic Centre' is a good resource for the deanery
- Potential links with the youth service
- Caritas Leeds paid worker to help run confirmation retreats and links with social action groups
- Caritas Leeds newsletter

### **Calderdale Deanery:**

Potential in working with the deanery pastoral council but two volunteers from this forum were unable to attend this workshop.

### **Presentation on Care of Ex-offenders**

- Overview was given of the West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project, which is a resettlement charity based at HMP Leeds. There to help ex-prisoners with life after release and to deal with challenges life throws at these specific individuals
- Provide on-going support and advice with housing, education, training, employment, health, drugs and alcohol misuse, debts and finance, family relationships
- Address: c/o HMP Leeds 2 Gloucester Terrace Leeds LS12 2TJ (0113 3874580)

- Email: [info@wyccp.org.uk](mailto:info@wyccp.org.uk)
- Website: [www.wyccp.org.uk](http://www.wyccp.org.uk)
- Volunteering: [www.wyccp.org.uk/volunteering](http://www.wyccp.org.uk/volunteering)

### **Showcasing some Catholic Care projects**

- Two short films were shared, one focusing on tackling isolation amongst the older age group and the other a 'Stay and Play' project targeting parents/ carers for babies/toddlers
- For advice and support in setting up such parish based groups please contact Catholic Care

### **Specific initiatives being considered/planned by Caritas Leeds Steering Group**

- Reflection Day (open to all involved in charitable/social action)
- Embed and expand the Caritas Leeds Ambassadors role
- Use of the Westminster Caritas 'Love in Action' programme
- Develop a bespoke website for Caritas Leeds or join with the revamped Diocesan website
- Raise awareness about the roll-out of the Universal Credit scheme
- Clear guidance on transporting parishioners to Mass or parish based activities
- Develop a focused prayer resource
- Becoming a 'Dementia Friendly' Diocese
- Social media as a means of communication
- Guidance in preparing to have discussions with local government councillors and or MPs

### **Suggestions of support for Caritas Leeds Ambassadors?**

- Provide opportunities for networking
- Communication bulletin to disseminate good practice and initiatives
- Use of approach adopted by the 'Do Cat'

### **Response from Caritas Leeds Steering Group:**

- Thank you for the action taken in the various deaneries so far and for inviting lay school chaplains to be involved.
- The role of the Caritas Leeds Ambassadors was revised based on the feedback you offered during the first workshop (November 2017). This was communicated but it needs to be fleshed out more in how it can become more alive.

It is our goal that our Caritas Leeds Ambassadors will be an integral network of people in our Diocese supporting charitable activities /social action.

You are **building a bridge** between each deanery/parish and Caritas Leeds to ensure that:

Aim/Goal of Being Caritas Leeds Ambassador	Things to consider	Practical Examples
News of amazing initiatives currently taking place across your deanery are shared and celebrated.	<p><i>Networking is crucial at both deanery level and across deaneries. Contact with active parishioners from different parishes need to be promoted.</i></p> <p><i>What is happening in parishes in your deanery?</i></p> <p><i>Can perhaps one ambassador take a coordinating role with the support of the Caritas Steering Group?</i></p> <p><i>Discuss approaches used to spark off new initiatives or getting other parishioners involved and interested?</i></p> <p><i>Link with parish based associations in your deanery e.g. Mothers' Union, Catenians, SVP, Knights of St Columba etc.</i></p>	<p>Use information from the audit you have been provided with to expand the number of Caritas Ambassadors in your area so that more people are involved</p> <p>Find someone who can set up social media accounts to promote and share what's going on.</p> <p>Find someone who can produce a regular newsletter or ask for a regular slot in the Parish bulletin, website?</p>
Spreading the Gospel Values through charitable work /social action.	Action speaks louder than words. Encourage groups within your parishes to reflect on what activities they are engaged with and link to specific gospel themes and Catholic Social Teaching.	Form a monthly prayer group focusing on praying for social justice/those in need. (Make it accessible to all - powerhouse of prayer includes those no longer physically able to do charitable works)
Develop/ enhance links with the Catholic schools in your area	How can the young people be engaged in what is going on? How can specific projects in your area be communicated to the local schools?	Find a link person in your local schools. Include what the school does for charity in the Parish bulletin or your own newsletters and vice versa.
Opportunities for voluntary work are promoted	By engaging other parishioners there is an opportunity to increase the number of volunteers and perhaps come up with new initiatives or link activities between parishes in your area.	Have a Caritas Leeds noticeboard at the back of church or in the church hall. Include an up-to-date list of opportunities to volunteer. Use website, newsletters and social media for this too.
Help raise awareness and support current and future deanery/diocesan wide campaigns/ projects.	<p>Ideas picked up by engaging with ambassadors from other deaneries to be shared with your deanery through may be newsletter, suggested items in parish bulletins, notice boards, website, use of social media.</p> <p>Communicate with Caritas Leeds Steering group any ideas of new initiatives /proposals for your deanery and or across the diocese.</p>	<p>Attend Caritas Leeds events where possible.</p> <p>Try to establish email or Facebook group to other Caritas Ambassadors.</p> <p>Commit to monthly update emails to the Caritas Leeds Coordinator.</p>
Be prayerful	in any gatherings which you have.	Liaise with your clergy in regards to for example prayers of the faithful for a specific project or category of people e.g. homeless

**Your deanery Caritas Leeds ambassadors may want to prioritise the suggestions/approaches offered above that are most relevant to your particular situation.**

- The above response will hopefully give you more suggestions on how we can embed the role of Caritas Leeds Ambassador with the aim of reflecting on what is going on and move on towards a more coordinated approach to the work being done for those in need.
- Members of the Steering Group are happy to attend your meetings in a supportive role. Please liaise with the Caritas Leeds Coordinator if you would like this to happen
- You are the closest to where the need of your deanery is but help and resources are available to support you.
- So we encourage you to continue with your contacts with others from the parishes within your deanery and schools.
- **A further workshop will be organised for Caritas Leeds Ambassadors in late May/early June** (date and venue to be confirmed) offering opportunities of networking, update on what has happened since the March work-shop and aiming to have a presentation on a topic which emerged from the last work-shop such as dementia, bereavement or mental health.
- Do communicate with Caritas Leeds Coordinator if there is anything specific you would like us to address in this workshop or any support you require.

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