

One Door Closes.

In January 2003, I began what was to become a huge part of my life for 11 years. Rev. Pauline had asked my friend, Angela Woodward, if she would consider taking over the Toddler Group at Marshside Road. Angela said she would, but only if I did it with her! I had recently retired after 35 years in the bank. When I was young, I always wanted to work with children but somehow life took a different direction! I agreed to “help” Angela.

We began with a few babies and toddlers, but somehow the group just kept on growing. Several times we have had to put on a waiting list as we had too many children to fit into the lounge along with their carers and of course all the toys. In 2008, Angela began full time work, Margaret Boston had been coming along to the group to offer Indian Head Massage to the mums (and often to me!). Margaret agreed to replace Angela, much to my delight.

The group goes from strength to strength and has a wonderful atmosphere. Friends are made at the group which last well into High School years. We have Christmas parties, trips to Windmill Farm and for the last few years we have raised money for Barnado's by joining their annual sponsored Big Toddle. The leadership team has grown and we have been very grateful to Avril Merone and Dorothy Taylor who are now part of the group. Lin Mayor has recently joined the team following my decision to 'retire'.

I have enjoyed seeing so many children pass through the group. I often see them with their mums out and about. It is wonderful to see so many coming to Holiday Club and Messy Church. It has been a real privilege to be involved in some small way with the lives of many families.

Margaret will tell you that I have been threatening to leave for some time. She has told me they would miss me as I have a loud voice!!

I really feel that now is the time to go, I'm sure I will miss the children (but not the noise!). Thank you to all who have supported us over the years and I know you will continue to support Margaret, Avril, Dorothy and Lin as they continue with this important outreach.

Carol Drury

Another Door Opens.

In October 2013, John and Linda from Southport Foodbank came to Marshside Road to talk to us about their work, and we collected food for them at our Harvest

Festival. Listening to John speak I thought, “that is something I would like to get involved with”. The next day, I went and had a look around and went home with an application form to become a volunteer. After I had submitted my form and had my references checked, I began to help out in December 2013. Initially I went on a Friday afternoon but now I go Mondays and Fridays all day.

It is appalling that in a supposedly 'wealthy' country like ours and an equally supposedly wealthy town like Southport, we should have a need for a Foodbank. Not just one Foodbank outlet, but there are now 7 in various locations around the town! Lakeside, where I work, is open from 1pm to 4pm every Monday and Friday. There is at least one outlet open every weekday.

The number of people who attend the Foodbank just keeps on growing. They come from all walks of life. It is very much a “there but for the grace of God go I” scenario.

On Friday 19th December we had 33 clients. At least 10 were large families so we probably fed about 100 people for 3 days. We also gave out special Christmas bags along with the toys so generously donated by our church family.

The main thing we are short of just now is space!! We have a portakabin for our warehouse, plus a small room in the main building. What we need is a much bigger space to weigh the food as it comes in, is then labelled clearly with the use by date, then it has to be put on the shelves ready to be made up into the food bags which go out. This is a mammoth task and we have different lists of food to go into single, couple, family or large family bags. Some days it is utter chaos. All the food comes into Lakeside and we then distribute whatever is needed by the other outlets.

We are hoping to raise between £3000 and £4000 in order to increase our storage space. This will be a huge task, but it is much needed, on health & safety grounds if nothing else! As I have just been given the task of warehouse manager it is something I will no doubt have to be involved with. If anyone has any fund raising ideas, please see me!

Very many thanks for all your generosity over the past 15 months. Clients come in our door embarrassed and upset, our aim is for them to have a smile on their face when they leave. Through the grace of God, they often do.

Carol Drury