



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
BBC RADIO 4 ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS
CHRISTMAS APPEAL

THANK YOU!!!

The 2009 Christmas Appeal, which was launched on the first Sunday in December on BBC Radio 4, produced a record result of £892,266! That's 26% more than the 2008 Appeal, and 10% more than our previous record in 2006. Donations through our website (www.smitf.org/christmas) were up 65% over previous years, but increased donations through Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) accounts, by telephone, cheques and cash, and several generous bequests all helped to raise this incredible amount.

Why was this Appeal so successful? BBC Radio 4's continuing support is certainly a major factor in telling our story. This year there was also the moving poem by a Connection client which featured on the Radio 4 website and YouTube. The weather may also have played its part: snow and freezing temperatures can make people think of others without homes. Then there was the economy: not being as badly off as a year ago and wanting to help those "at the bottom of the pile". Whatever the reasons, we're very grateful for this result, as it means we are able to help even more people in need this year through the work of The Connection at St Martin's and the Vicar's Relief Fund.

WHY A NEWSLETTER?

We know many of you support the Christmas Appeal not only because of the work we do, but because of the value for money your donation receives (see inside). In the present economic climate, however, no charity can simply sit back and expect to receive donations, and we can't just cross our fingers and hope you'll remember us from one December to the next. (We love it when you do, of course, but we can't expect it!) So we decided to produce this mid-year report to thank you for your support, let you know how we did and how your donation has helped. Most copies of this newsletter have been distributed by e-mail, saving on postage. Please feel free to pass this copy on to friends and family, and if you would like more paper copies to give out, please get in touch.

Christmas in July

July 2010

How we help

The Connection at St Martin's works with 200 homeless people every day. The grant from the Appeal underpins the provision of core services, including a café, showers, laundry and lockers. During the cold weather in January, the Night Centre accommodated around 90 people each night, more than double its regular intake.

For many homeless people, their contact with The Connection is a catalyst for change: with support, they begin to see choices and opportunities, and make decisions which move their lives from chaos and uncertainty to something more stable and sustainable.

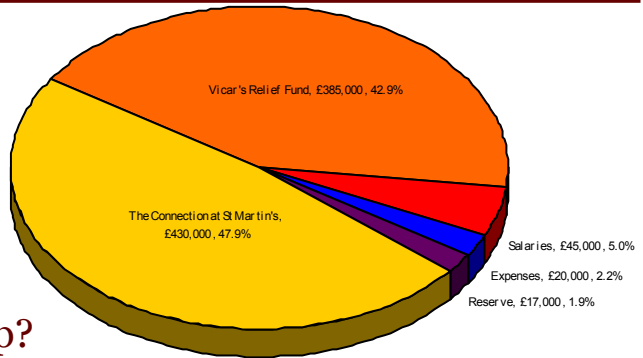
The **Vicar's Relief Fund** makes over 1200 grants a year to individuals and families in need across the UK. Our priorities are to people at risk of becoming homeless or with experience of being homeless. Grants are usually made towards repaying arrears, deposits or rent in advance, and ordinary living expenses. Although the grants are not large (maximum £250), they are intended as crisis grants and are usually dispatched within a few days or less.

We are often told that, more than the money, it is the knowledge that someone cares that enables a person in a desperate situation to turn their life around.

How far does a donation to the Christmas Appeal go?

- £1 pays for a meal for a homeless person at The Connection
- £30 pays for an advice session at The Connection, where people can be referred to accommodation and get specialist help for mental health, addiction or other problems
- £60 will pay for one night's stay in the Night Centre, or put someone on The Connection's in-house computer course for a week to improve their skills
- £170 is an average Vicar's Relief Fund grant. It may help towards repaying arrears to prevent someone being made homeless; or a deposit to enable someone to get off the streets or out of a hostel, or a bed or cooker so someone who has been homeless can start to make a home for themselves

91p of every £1 raised went to help people in need!



Who did we help?

People like Mrs Stewart, who couldn't cope with the bills after her husband died. A grant from the Vicar's Relief Fund helped prevent her and her children being evicted from their home.

After losing her job, Meg built up rent arrears that put her at risk of homelessness. A grant from the Vicar's Relief Fund secured her accommodation. She now chairs her hostel's Young People's Forum, supporting others with similar problems. She wrote to us: "You bring confidence back to those who have lost their way."

Claire and her baby were living in a supported housing project that receives a grant from the Vicar's Relief Fund. The staff discovered she was about to turn down a tenancy offer because she didn't have the bus fare to go and view it. The problem was solved by using some of the VRF money, and now the family have set up home and Claire is planning to go to college.

Lee was working as a head chef when his relationship broke down; he lost his home and his job. He had nowhere to go and eventually ended up on the streets. When he came to the Day Centre at The Connection, he was immediately referred to an emergency hostel and used all of our basic services. Lee's life is moving on now. He has moved out of the hostel and has his own flat, and is now actively looking for work. He said: "The Connection really helped me when I needed it. It kept me sane and helped give me hope. My future is looking so much better now".

It didn't take much to help these people, and thousands more like them, to turn their lives around. And thanks to your donation to the 2009 Christmas Appeal, we're helping many more this year.

During the First World War, St Martin-in-the-Fields became “the church of the ever-open door”, providing a place of rest and support to troops leaving for and returning from the Western Front. In peacetime, the church continued to be a focus for those in need from all over the country. In 1924, the first radio broadcast of a church service was made from St Martin’s. In 1927, Revd Dick Sheppard made the first Christmas Appeal from the pulpit, broadcast on the BBC Home Service. Thanks to the BBC, each year since then, the Vicar of St Martin’s has made a radio appeal to support our work. The Christmas Appeal is the world’s longest running broadcast charity appeal.

The 2010 BBC Radio 4 St Martin-in-the-Fields Christmas Appeal will be broadcast on Sunday 5 December.



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**Our work goes on all year round — it doesn't have to be Christmas to help us!
You can support the Appeal by:**

- ✓ giving online at www.smitf.org/christmas (credit or debit cards, CAF Charitycards or PayPal)
- ✓ or Freephone 0800 082 82 84 (credit or debit cards, or CAF Charitycards)
- ✓ or send a cheque or postal order made payable to the St Martin-in-the-Fields Christmas Appeal and post to:
6 St Martin's Place, London WC2N 4JJ.
- ✓ If you would like to make a regular commitment through a standing order, or continue to support our work with a gift in your will, please contact us on 020 7766 1125 or 1127. Thank you.