

Thoughts from John, our Chair



I have been looking back through recent Impact Newsletters and cannot help but praise God for His continual guidance and blessings of the past two years – a time of great uncertainty. At the same time, I have been reflecting on my daily bible notes – those for Nehemiah – the response of someone to a call from God through the disciplines of prayer, fasting, repentance, and worship.

Nehemiah loved his homeland and when he heard how distressed the situation was in Jerusalem, his heart was convicted. The burden was so strong that he wept and mourned for days, whilst praying and fasting to clarify an overwhelming desire to do something about the situation. Looking through the book of Nehemiah we can recognize the timeless attributes of this divine calling detailed throughout the story. It illustrates one man’s willingness to:

- response to a call from God
- risk his life, career and well-being whilst serving God
- make special requests of others to provide critical items needed
- step out and do something he had little or no experience in doing.
- believe that God would provide in new and unexpected ways
- stand up to opposition to his work for God
- help those with special needs
- recognize, help and encourage the work God is already doing

The book of Nehemiah is full of situations which are familiar to our Impact workers, serving God as they do in schools around Bedfordshire. Impact responded to a call from God 30 years ago and we have been privileged to be able to take the Gospel message into schools for such a long period of time. Every day brings new challenges, including tasks that may not make sense at the time. We have stepped out and God has provided in new and unexpected ways. At the same time, we have stood up to opposition, whilst working with others to support those less fortunate than ourselves. I pray the next 30 years will be as exciting and satisfying time for both Trustees and workers.

On behalf of our Trustees and workers I thank you for your ongoing prayer and financial support, without which we could not serve God in the expansion of his Kingdom here on earth.

The truth is, we may never know the Kingdom impact of our obedience in the unexpected tasks we do, no matter how seemingly minute they might seem. Praise the Lord.

**Some statistics of the work done in person
by Becky, Hayley and Trish in the past year.**

These show how many schools these events took place in.

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| Assemblies/Collective worship 39 | It’s Your Move sessions 14 | Prayer Spaces/ Creative Prayer 7 |
| Christmas Activity Sessions 16 | Easter Activity Sessions 26 | Wellbeing/ Nurture groups 4 |

There were also other events including retreat days, holiday clubs and story/craft sessions and not to forget the **Following in the Footsteps of Bunyan** event. **And there was more!!! Online resources included**

Videos for assemblies and reflection times which potentially were viewed 1,709 times in schools

RE and reflection resource packs which potentially were used 535 times in schools

The Barn Nativity video was viewed on YouTube around 400 times

The Easter Experience video was viewed on YouTube around 300 times

Pass on information about IMPACT by sharing this link to our video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wf1KxTc3-2A>

News from Becky



During the summer holidays I took part in two holiday clubs, one with The Salvation Army which Hayley has written about, and one at Christ Church Bedford. The Christ Church holiday club was called 'Pyramid Rocks' and was all about Joseph.

We started the sessions with an energetic workout along with lively actions songs and fun sporty games. We did have some time to move at a slower pace too with creative crafts and peaceful 'opening the scroll' times during which we had some wonderful conversations about Joseph's story and how it related to our lives. I was excited to be called upon to be a 'special guest' storyteller in the middle of the week, which meant I had to dress up in disguise! (See photo) It was great to have some of the children join me to interactively bring the story to life too. Please pray that the children will recall and remember what they learnt.



Along with the It's Your Move/Transition themed assemblies and workshops for Year 6 children, we were also asked if we would be able to do some transition themed Prayer Spaces for the Year 6's in one of our schools. I put together a special Prayer and Reflection Space session which Hayley and I took into the school and ended up having quite a deep and moving impact on the students. The teacher remarked that even those she thought wouldn't be interested were deeply moved by the experience and she was very impressed by the standard of materials. It was also run as part of a Year 6 end of year retreat day. Again, it had a deeply moving impact on the children and staff who took part. One child remarked that they wished they could do it at the end of every school year. (See photos below)



On a hot and sunny day in July Following in the footsteps of John Bunyan returned! Due to the pandemic, it had been a number of years since we last ran it and this year it was slightly different to how it was run in the past. Working in conjunction with the Bunyan Museum we still had the costumed characters of John and Elizabeth Bunyan leading a Q&A session and a trail through the town along with a tour of the museum and church but instead of one class coming for the whole day we had two classes attend for half a day each. This did mean that John and Elizabeth had to walk the town trail four times in one day as each class is split in two with each half rotating between the town trail and museum and church. However, we were pleasantly surprised that even though they had only spent half a day with us the level of learning the children displayed was still high.



News from Trish



As I reflect over the last term it is encouraging to see how things have moved on since the pandemic. I have been able to go back into most of my schools while at the same time remain connected with those still being cautious through our online resources. I was involved in taking regular assemblies, helping in prayer spaces, creative prayer, Lifepath and Following in the Footsteps of John Bunyan. It has been inspiring to see how God continues to work in the lives of children and staff.

I was also able to offer 'It's Your Move' assemblies to a number of year 6 children in various schools, so as to help them with their transition from primary to secondary school. I focused on the choices, challenges and changes they would face based on the Wise and Foolish builder's parable as well as interacting with them through games and Q&A. One of the teachers at a local Bedford school said, "Thank you so much for coming in to do the transition assembly last week. I think that with such a big change in their lives coming up, the opportunity to consider and reflect was very worthwhile."

I ran wellbeing groups using the OutoftheBox resource. The interactive and reflective nature of the storytelling was well received and the children engaged during the wondering questions and creative response time. I found that over the weeks the children grew in their confidence and friendships, expressed their anxieties with courage and were able to process the struggles they face. A child, who is a young carer, expressed that they feel they can be themselves in the group and that it takes their worries away.

I look forward to see what God has in store for us as we go into the new academic year. Please continue to pray for us and thank you for your support.

News from Hayley



This summer, we ran a holiday club for local primary school children called 'Champions'. The theme was chosen to link in with the recent win for the Lionesses (England's women's football team) and the Commonwealth games. Each day the children were able to play a number of different games (based on sports), make crafts, eat together, talk about faith and the Bible, as well as spend time in conversation, reflection and prayer. Each day we looked at words that can be found in sport but also in the Bible, such as 'perseverance' and 'trust'. We also set up some of our prayer stations (which we usually take into school for 'Prayer Spaces' and 'Creative Prayer') and the children were able to reflect on all that we'd done as well as explore their own beliefs. One child said "this is my favourite part of the day".

We were privileged to meet and journey with this group of children over the course of the week, and we are grateful to Bedford Salvation Army not only for hosting and providing for the holiday club, but most importantly for the ongoing prayer support for each of the children that attended.

We are hopeful to see these children again soon in their different school settings, and praise God for the way in which He used Impact to make a difference for each of the children that attended.



Thoughts from Jackie, our Treasurer



For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things" (Matt. 6:31-34).

We continue to trust in God's provision for the work of Impact as we have seen our monthly standing orders reduce over the last few years during the Covid pandemic. We have felt as a group of Trustees that it has been God's will to grow our team of schools workers over the same period. The net result is that we are drawing on our reserves at the moment to meet our expenditure commitments. We are trusting that God knows the plans he has for Impact in the future. If that includes you being able to set up a regular standing order, we would be delighted to hear from you. Thank you to all our supporters who walk with us to ensure we can teach children about Jesus in our local schools.

If you would like to donate to this wonderful work which impacts the lives of so many children, please see the 'Donate' page of the website

<https://www.impactbedford.org.uk/donate/>

or contact me via our website to discuss how to do this.

www.Impactbedford.org.uk

Bedford Area Schools Christian Support Trust
(Registered charity number 1010412) in association with

