



Supporters' Newsletter

Christmas 2018

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Merry Christmas!

It is an absolute privilege to lead Junction 42 and see the work spread to new prisons and new communities in Scotland and Teesside. At Christmas we are all too aware of the vulnerability of the Christmas story, the humble and lowly birth of our Saviour being born to a teenage mum in a stable followed by a genocide of infants. Amongst the divine and amazing stories of God's kingdom coming, Junction 42 work in the reality of injustice, poverty, sickness and sometimes death. Yet we believe the light shines even brighter in the darkness. This Christmas and in this newsletter we choose to celebrate the light made flesh and the goodness of God. We celebrate Jesus becoming incarnate among us: in the Bible we read of the extent of the celebration with Magi, shepherds and angelic hosts. In this newsletter we celebrate the divine, the miraculous and the transformation of seeing God's work in the region. We celebrate that we have seen more people come to faith than ever before, leaders raised up and communities transformed.

With love from Joanne O'Connor.



Connect Weekend Away

In October around 100 of the lads and lasses from the Connect Networks in Newcastle, Durham, Stockton, Teesside and Edinburgh got together for the annual weekend away to the Scottish Borders. The weather was damp, but spirits weren't as we had an amazing time worshipping, building friendships and enjoying a time away from our usual surroundings. Guest speakers Paul and Vicky Lloyd shared inspiring testimonies of how God has healed and transformed them and spoke of how God wants to set us free from darkness and addiction. The weekend was a truly transformational time for many of the people that came!

Stories of Hope: Cheryl

Cheryl came to Job Club in January, having written off her chances of ever getting another job. During our time working with Cheryl, not only did she get a job as a Personal Trainer, working in a local gym, Cheryl and her daughter are now touring the country as actresses, playing themselves in their story of struggle in prison and living without a mother. A review in The Guardian commends how they play themselves "with dry humour, physical grace and matter-of-fact honesty" and gave the play a 4-star rating! Cheryl has also appeared on BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour programme to tell her story. A few of the Junction 42 team went to see the play in Newcastle and were delighted to see how good it was, and how well Cheryl is doing!

Don't Forget the Birds review - mother and daughter tackle life after prison

★★★★☆

Live theatre, Newcastle

Playing themselves with humour, grace and honesty, a former inmate and her daughter tell their story and reveal their bond



Carl*

Carl, who was referred to us through the Job Centre, has just found paid work for the first time (as in working “legit”) in over 10 years, less than six months after leaving prison, as a labourer stripping out buildings. “I’m a stripper Alan!” was his tongue-in-cheek phone call to the office, (although we’d perhaps not put it like that on his CV...!). The job centre staff who know him well say that the confidence changes they have observed in that period is “little short of life transforming!” Carl actually first came in contact with Junction 42 in 2015, sent by the same Job Centre to our Job Club, where his initial (begrudging!) engagement slowly increased to the point that he agreed to attend a CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) card course, which he passed. We then supported him as character witnesses through a court appearance for historic fraud offences, and referred him for debt counselling to CAP Debt, who unpicked a lot of tangled mess for him, including obtaining a Debt Relief Order. Unfortunately Carl returned to prison in 2016, but remained keen to engage with Junction 42 in the jail from a faith perspective, and also had a number of visits from the job club staff including on his 50th birthday which would otherwise been greeted with nothing and by nobody whatsoever. He served out his sentence and was picked up at the prison gate by the Junction 42 Sunderland Job Club manager, who brought him to our office to sign up for Universal Credit, took him to his flat to put top-ups on the gas and electric whilst he waited for his advance benefits payment, and bought him a late lunch at the end of a long and stressful day. Carl has since engaged with the church community regularly and made friends for the first time in years - he was baptised in the North Sea in June! He also joined the 1:2:1 mentoring programme in March, and last week started paid agency work as a labourer. His first fully legit work in over ten years. An amazing team effort, where this man has had full professional and community support, to the most significant effect.

James*

James has recently come into prison on his first sentence for an assault. He is a cleaner in the Education Department and asked to join Alpha a couple of weeks ago because he saw how happy other lads were when leaving the chapel. He has been struggling with shame linked to his offence and had been self-harming and made an attempt on his life. He prayed for forgiveness on the first session he was at and experienced the power of the Holy Spirit when we prayed for him. He knew nothing about the Christian faith but is keen to grow and

The Big Give

Junction 42 had the opportunity to partner with the Big Give and our amazing match-funders to run a Christmas Challenge fundraising campaign.

We were overwhelmed by the generosity shown and raised a huge £15,251. Thank you so much to those who donated!



Thank you so much for supporting the work of Junction 42 as we see lives visibly transformed by the hope of the gospel.

We hope you are encouraged by reading about the amazing things that God is doing!

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please email us using the details below and we will take you off our mailing list.

*All names on this newsletter have been changed to protect confidentiality