

THE CIRCLE

SPRING 2020



Hungry children in the UK?



Bake Off's Nadiya Hussain helps us tackle child food poverty

'One girl was savagely beaten by friends'

New mental health youth workers

Force of Habit

The Oasis ethos



Chalke Talk



The spread of the coronavirus has reminded us of how fragile the way of life we all take for granted really is.

And, while this is a very difficult time, it's also prompted wonderful acts of kindness as communities have come together to help one another.

My sincere thanks to everyone who has supported us with emergency funding so we can keep our food projects going for those struggling on the lowest incomes.

So, it's proving to be an unexpected way of celebrating the 35th anniversary of Oasis - the community-building charity. It's incredible to me that the organisation which began in a small back office in Tonbridge, is now one of the largest charities in the UK, providing housing, education, healthcare and various other community-building initiatives, working with over 100,000 people every day.

But beyond all this, the really important thing that Oasis staff and you, friends and partners, have helped us achieve is our local community development model; we call it a 'Community Hub'. In other words, rather than build a string of one-off, stand-alone social projects, we have created a wrap-around, joined-up method of building community that helps people in hard-hit areas help themselves.

This is how we have been able to re-deploy our staff so quickly in the present 'social isolating' crisis and find alternative ways to deliver our services in the communities where we work. Everything from emergency food for the most vulnerable children and adults to 1-2-1 youth mentoring over Skype, whilst at a national level our Friendship phone line for those feeling anxious or worried by the COVID-19 pandemic, is providing much needed support.

And, while at this is happening, our regular work goes on. For instance, we've just employed two more youth workers with a mental health remit to support young people in north east London (see article page 4). I'm also personally delighted to announce our ground breaking partnership with Crystal Palace Football club to pioneer a holistic approach to learning; where every young player, whatever their background, is given the opportunity to achieve their full potential, both on and off the pitch (see page 9).

Thank you. God bless you. Stay safe!

Tackling holiday hunger

Bake Off winner **Nadiya Hussain** has given her support to Plate Up, our child food poverty campaign. As schools close, Oasis Holiday Hunger action and food projects step into the gap.

'Holiday Hunger' is now an acknowledged fact in our society and the coronavirus crisis has made the situation worse. Every year when schools break up for the summer holidays, thousands of children in the UK are at risk of going hungry without their free school meals and snacks.

Oasis works in areas where some 45% of families qualify for free school meals compared with the national average which is 15%. (Free School Meals or 'FSM' is often used as a poverty indicator). When these stop as terms ends, parents are under enormous pressure to find money for extra food. They will often skip meals themselves or live off cereal so their children can eat. Children as young as five are going hungry.

Why is this happening?

'It's a mixture of people having to wait a long time for Universal Credit and disability benefits to be processed, and families experiencing in-work poverty,' explains Rebekah Gibson, who manages the Foodbank and Advice Centre at Oasis Hub Waterloo. 'This present crisis will only worsen the stresses and pressures that already exist for families.'



Inside this issue...

- 3 Join Nadiya in tackling Holiday Hunger
- 5 Health in Mind – our new mental health youth workers
- 8 News
- 10 Force of Habit
- 11 Fundraising thanks
- 12 Books & resources

Thank you to our models from Oldham Hubballo Club



Circle Magazine is published by Oasis UK
1 Kennington Road
London SE1 7QP
Registered charity 1026487

Contact us
Tel: 020 7921 4200
Email: fundraising@oasisuk.org
Facebook: @oasisuk
Twitter: @oasis_uk

Printed on sustainably sourced paper.
Designed by EPLS epls.design

Join with Nadiya to tackle food poverty

'In 2020, there is no place for Holiday Hunger. By just giving £5, the price of a lunch, we can significantly reduce the number of children going hungry this year and beyond. Please join me in fighting to end food poverty.'

In the wake of COVID-19 virus crisis, there is even more need to tackle child food poverty.

Companies such as Sodexo, Meals and More and Euroclear UK & Ireland are donating generous sums, but we urgently need £15,000 to help meet the extra demand for 'holiday hunger' action this year. **Can you help?**

Text PLATEUP to 70085 to give £5. To give another amount up to £20, text 'PLATEUP 10' to give £10 or 'PLATEUP 20' to give £20.

You can also give online: www.oasisuk.org/plate

Thank you



Fay Osborne, of Oasis Hub Warndon in Worcester agrees: 'We know about the need because we chat to families at the usual free breakfast drop-in which we run on a Monday morning. During the session, we offer foodbank vouchers and items from our food pantry too.'

Oasis is well-placed to help tackle holiday hunger.

We have 52 academy schools across the country with kitchens, play areas and gyms, ideal for hosting Holiday Clubs. Our community hubs have trained youth workers, volunteers and good links with other charities, foodbanks, churches and local authority services.

Having seen the impact and success of last summer's holiday hunger action, we planned to invite over 3,000 children and young people to 15 'Plate Up' clubs this summer, offering lunch, fun, and all kinds of sports, cooking, music, arts and crafts.

With schools having been closed in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, our holiday hunger action may look a little different this year.

Our school and community teams have already joined forces to make sure children who receive Free School Meals are still offered lunch each day – through term time and the holidays. Family activities are being made available online, with virtual meet-ups and phone check-ins to care for the wellbeing of young people.

Thank you everyone who has supported our Plate Up appeal so far. You can be sure our Community Hub teams are doing all they can to provide families with food parcels and emergency supplies.

"A holiday project serving a healthy lunch really made a difference to our school's families last summer. It is always easy to tell which children have been busy and well-fed during the long holiday as they're the ones who come back ready to learn."

Diana Morgan, Principal,
Oasis Academy Johanna, London



Photo shows models at a similar Oasis Holiday Club

"The holidays are so tough, and today has just given me a real boost. I have not had to worry about making food, I have instead been able to play with my children and enjoy making our food together with other people, and it's been really fun. So thank you, it's made a really big difference to me and my family."

Parent at Summer Holiday drop-in,
Oasis Hub Warndon

Health in mind

Anxiety, anger management and self-harm – all in a day's work for our new mental health youth workers

Things have changed since 'youth work' meant setting up ping pong tables in church halls. Oasis Hub Hadley has just appointed its first youth workers dedicated to supporting young people with mental health issues.

Boggiella Andoh (25) and James Titley (29) both have experience and qualifications in motivational therapies and will be supporting young people experiencing the beginnings of mental health issues often brought on by traumatic events. These may include high levels of anxiety, self-harm, anger management and feelings of isolation.

'We're seeing cases where young people have mental health issues, which are not thought serious enough for referral to the NHS Children's and Adolescents Mental Health Service (CAMHS),' says Sam Ellis, Hub Leader at Oasis Community Hub Hadley. 'They end up slipping through the net and start to feel isolated.'

Funding for this placement is through the Violence Reduction Unit of the Mayor of London's office for Policy and Crime.

Together Bobbiella and James will have contact with around 100 young people from the Enfield and Haringey area.

Encouraging small steps

Bobbiella Andoh, has a Masters in child psychology and uses methods such as CBT to help young people suffering with mental health issues seen in North Middlesex Hospital A&E.

'We're here to support young people with high levels of anxiety who have experienced traumatic events,' explains Bobbiella. 'We also help those who are self-harming or unable to control their anger.'

'The assault or self-inflicted injury that has got them into A & E is what allows us to take them on,' she says. 'Underneath there might be other issues they can't cope with, such as feeling belittled by others, chaotic or violent home backgrounds, learning disabilities or depression.'

Once a young person signs up to work with Bobbiella, they arrange weekly meetings at school or a café.

'I ask them what they want to achieve and I research specific therapies that will help them. I remind them that we cannot control our world but we can control ourselves, and we can find better ways of coping with issues than resorting to violence, drugs or becoming isolated.'

'I encourage people to take small steps. For example, one young man was smoking weed daily and he managed to stop for a week. He relapsed but then went on and did another week without drugs. He's now motivated by the positive things he can do with the money he's saving.'

Bobbiella is based in North Middlesex Hospital and is called on whenever a young person up to the age of 25 is brought to A & E as a result of an assault or self-inflicted aggression.

'I can see as many as four people a day. There is violence in this area and last month we saw four stabbing victims in A&E.'

'I've seen some cases of child sexual exploitation but mostly it's young people coming in for injuries like punching a wall or being bullied at school. The case that upset me the most was where a young girl had been savagely beaten up by her own friends.'

Bobbiella says the A & E youth service works well because it's an intervention at an early stage before things get worse.

Bobbiella Andoh, Youth Outreach Worker (Mental Health Specialist) outside A & E at North Middlesex University Hospital, Enfield. The placement is funded by the Violence Reduction Unit of the Mayor of London's office for Policy and Crime.



"Opportunities to provide children with supportive environments early may be key for ensuring good mental health for all children and young people."

Source: Mental Health of Children and Young People in England

Mental health affects everyone

Going into Ponders End Youth Centre in Hadley North East London is a bit like stepping back in time.

There are groups of young people chatting and playing Monopoly, others are practising basketball and downstairs, in a specially-designed studio, the music group are working on a new song.

The youth team at Oasis Hub Hadley have worked hard to create this friendly, non-threatening atmosphere and it's paid off with around 30 people aged 11-19 attending each evening. This is where James Tittley, a Youth Outreach Worker specialising in Mental Health, is based. James has worked in the past with young homeless people with mental health issues and brings a wealth of experience to his new role.

He is running weekly after-school wellness workshops for young people from Oasis Academy Hadley and other schools and for others referred by social services. 'We talk about stress and relationships,' says James, 'Mental health affects everyone and thinking about it early on in life helps young people develop coping methods and understand their own thought processes.'

'We encourage young people to set goals and measure success using the Outcomes Star. That's a tool that helps people reflect on and record their progress. Goals might be attending group regularly, volunteering or learning a new skill and we celebrate achievement with our 'Annual Youth Awards'.

James says the youth club provides an alternative to finding validation elsewhere such as in a gang. 'There's something on every evening after school including 'Girls Club' and 'Boys Club' where everyone turns off their phones! For some it's a sanctuary.'

If you want to help us expand our vital mental health youth work, please donate at www.oasis.org/donate or contact fundraising@oasis.org

Key factors in mental health issues

1 in 8 young people aged 2-19 have mental health disorders according to an extensive survey 'Mental Health of Children and Young People in England' published by NHS Digital in 2018. Key factors are:

- Living in lower income households
- Parents separating or in financial difficulties
- Cyberbullying
- Sexual identity issues
- Parents have poor mental health
- Not taking part in school-based or other external clubs and networks
- Use of illicit drugs



25 years in India

Oasis India celebrated its 25th anniversary with a major event bringing together hundreds of staff and people helped by its programmes.

Our work there started in 1993 with a few volunteers on a railway platform in Mumbai. Oasis India is now an organisation spread across 11 hubs, employing a hundred staff in three cities and impacting thousands of people's lives.

People such as Deepak who was found abandoned aged about two on a railway station in Mumbai. Oasis has stood beside him throughout his life and he now has a University degree.

Ravi ran away from home when he was 16 and became addicted to glue and drugs. Thanks to Oasis India, he now has a family, works for a charity and is becoming a pastor.

Four staff members received recognition for 15 years' service with Oasis India.

'At the event, we had the opportunity to look back at the history of Oasis India together with those that were part of that journey,' says Steve Chalke.

'We would like to thank all our supporters and volunteers the world over for believing in our cause and for helping us come this far.

'Here's to another 25 years of Oasis transforming lives in communities across India!'

www.oasisindia.org

£50k for women fleeing domestic abuse

Oasis Community Housing celebrated 35 years of work in social housing homelessness with an award of £50,000 to support women fleeing domestic abuse.



The funding comes from Nationwide, through County Durham Community Foundation, and will be used to provide safe housing when needed in the Gateshead area.

Helen Hicks, who leads the programme, said: 'The funding means we can now offer our own housing, with its high standards, to women who need to leave the family home.

Oasis has also launched a new service called 'Somewhere Safe to Stay'. People who are sleeping rough or in housing crisis in the Gateshead area can now be referred immediately to a safe housing solution.

www.oasiscommunityhousing.org

Coronavirus phone line

Oasis has launched a national phone line offering a listening ear to those in isolation who feel lonely or anxious. This is not an advice line - it's an offer of company and kindness on the other end of the phone, at a time when many of us really need it.

Our Friendship Line number is 020 7921 4272. Open from 9am to 5pm, Mon-Sun.



The HealthSpace Warriors at Oasis Johanna Academy in London promote healthy eating and snacks among their peers throughout the school.



Making healthy options the easiest options

Following a successful two-year pilot, Oasis has received another four years of major funding for its Healthspace project to turn the tide against childhood obesity and increase the flow of healthy options in local schools and the wider community. Guy's and St Thomas' Charity is continuing to invest into new initiatives together with Battersea Power Station Foundation.

David Tchilingirian, Project Director at Oasis Hub Waterloo, says, 'We are trailblazing a community-led approach to make healthier options the easiest options, by redesigning and reshaping the local early years, street and school environments - where local children and families spend their time.'

More information at www.gsttcharity.org.uk

£126k award for sport

Oasis Hub Waterloo is partnering with Sport England to help local families get active. A new £126,000 grant from Sport England's Family Fund will fund a whole range of new sports and activities for local families across Lambeth - all part of building health and wellbeing together.

www.oasiswaterloo.org



Crystal Palace FC tie up

Oasis is launching a new partnership with Premiership Club Crystal Palace. From September, we'll be providing pioneering educational support for all young players in the Crystal Palace Football Club Academy. The partnership will help teens with extra lesson support, as well as building character and resilience using the Oasis Nine Habits.



Oasis Hub Oldham secures £10k for creative Heritage Trail

Oasis Hub Oldham has received a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £10,000 for the Leesbrook Heritage trail, an exciting project featuring nature walks, community arts and history workshops.



Oasis Southampton City Farm

Oasis Southampton City Farm received a donation of £2,000 from the Gannett Foundation, owners of the local Daily Echo newspaper. The money will help carry out essential works on the farm which attracts 5,600 visitors a year.

Surrey - London Ride100 cycling event

As we go to press, this event is still scheduled to take place on Sunday, 15 August 2020. We still have some places left for cyclists. All you need to do is raise £300 for Oasis projects and we can give you tips on how to do that.



Force of habit



The Oasis Ethos is at the heart of everything we do. In each issue of 'Circle' **Jill Rowe**, our Oasis Ethos & Formation Director, will be taking us through the Oasis 9 Habits.

Everything within Oasis is framed by our ethos. Our ethos is rooted in what we believe and who we are. It is an expression of our character. Rooted in the story and beliefs of Oasis, we describe our ethos through a particular set of values that inform and provide the lens on everything we do. We sum our ethos up in this way;

- A passion to include
- A desire to treat people equally respecting differences
- A commitment to healthy, open relationships
- A deep sense of hope that things can change and be transformed
- A sense of perseverance to keep going for the long haul

We want to live by and be known for these values. In Oasis, they are the organisational values we aspire to. It means that we are committed to a model of inclusion, equality, healthy relationships, hope, and perseverance in every Oasis Hub community.

Now this ethos is something we have to constantly work at. It is never going to happen by chance. Instead, each of us needs to play our part in making it real. Some days we get stuff right and other days, not so much! This means there can be a gap between where we are and what we aspire to. Recognising this is helpful because it reminds us that we each have things to work on; we have space to grow, develop and change to become the best version of ourselves.

This is where the 9 Habits come in. We actively promote and practice the Oasis 9 Habits which we describe as an invitation to a way of life characterised by being compassionate, patient, humble, joyful, honest, hopeful, considerate, forgiving and self-controlled.

For us at Oasis, it helps us turn our ethos from a set of statements into a lived reality which is fantastic! But we also believe that by becoming people who live this way of the 9 Habits, we become the best version of ourselves, whatever our age, whoever we are. We are transformed, and we are also able to play our part in bringing transformation locally, nationally and globally. Now that is a great thing to be part of!

In the next edition we will be looking at the habit of being forgiving.

Fundraising thank yous

We couldn't do what we do without our supporters. You're the ones who bridge the funding gaps and keep the life-changing work of Oasis going. Thank you!

Karen (left) and Dawn at the start of Big Half Marathon.



Super Supporter Karen Kee

Karen Kee age 45, is a stroke physician in the NHS and has been an Oasis supporter for 7 years. She and her wife Dawn have a very busy home life with three beautiful daughters aged 9, 6 and 6.

Why does she support Oasis?

'We attend Oasis Waterloo church as a family where we feel really welcome. It is amazing to be part of an inclusive community and we wanted to give something back. There is so much need in our communities and I find the projects that Oasis is involved with meaningful so I wanted to contribute to them.'

Fun on the run

Father and son duo Rob & Bailey Hewlett excelled themselves in the Vitality Big Half Marathon held in March. They raised £705. Here Bob, a consultant based in Jersey, tells us why he did it.

'I have followed Steve Chalke's and Oasis' work for many years (more years than I probably care to remember!). When the email came in about the Big Half Marathon Challenge, I replied without really thinking and next thing I knew I was committed!

I was very pleased that my son Bailey agreed to run too. I had never run more than 5 or 6 miles in one go all my life. I was made redundant early in January 2020 and if nothing else this meant I had plenty of time to commit to training.

It was brilliant (and actually quite emotional) to take part in such an event and whilst I found the run tough, the sense of achievement made all the aches and pains worthwhile. It was lovely to meet Di at the end. Her enthusiastic welcome and support as well as running for a good cause made the effort even more worthwhile.'



Corporate supporters

Oasis would like to thank **Sodexo's STOP HUNGER foundation** for their donation of £10,000 towards our Plate Up Holiday Hunger programme.



ITEC, one of the UK's leading Technology Managed Service Providers has provided huge support for Oasis Uganda, including building an IT classroom in Oasis Academy. Most recently, they have supported the emergency appeal in response to the COVID-19 Crisis.



Worshipful Company of Vintners for their donation of £30,000 in support of the Oasis Youth Support programme.



Books and resources from Oasis



£6.00
(+p&p)

Lost Message of Paul

Steve Chalke's best-selling book that challenges our views on what the Apostle Paul really meant.

Set of videos also available for group discussion.



£2.00
(+p&p)

In the Name of Love

This report sets out the staggering negative mental health effects that LGBT people face in the majority of churches and suggests ways to make places of worship more inclusive.

Also available as an ebook



£2.00
(+p&p)

A Matter of Integrity

A call for the Church to grapple with the issues of sexuality and inclusion.

Also available as an ebook



£3.50
(+p&p)

The Gender Agenda: Towards a Biblical Theology on Gender Identity, Reassignment and Confirmation

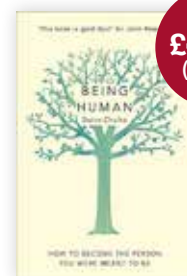
This book will help individual Christians and churches to engage with the Bible's trajectory of radical inclusion and to form an inclusive theology which is both Christ-like and biblical.



£2.50
(+p&p)

TRANSforming churches: a practical guide to trans inclusion

A guide designed to help churches begin the conversation on the inclusion of transgender people, containing a detailed guide to appropriate language as well as suggestions on practical steps.



£4.00
(+p&p)

Being Human study series

It's easy to sleepwalk through life without ever really considering what we're here for. Being Human is ideal for group studies on the theme of loving God, our neighbour and ourselves. Set of four videos also available (£15 to stream or download any time) plus leader's notes.

Order ebooks, printed books, videos
and group discussion resources online

visit openchurch.network

email fundraising@oasisuk.org

Oasis