

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- **Make a donation** - please make your cheque out to WDGB LTD and send to the address below. Gift-aid donations welcome from tax-payers.
- **Become a Friend of KeySteps** - join our mailing list and receive newsletters and information about events.
- **Run a fundraising event** - coffee morning, table-sale, concert, quiz, cake-sale, boot sale etc.
- **Make us your church project** - we will support with talks and information leaflets, displays etc.
- **Display our leaflets** in your church or community hall.
- **If you are a landlord**, please consider allowing us to place our clients with you - **we are very grateful to those landlords who continue to support us by housing the people we help with deposits.**

COULD YOU BE A TRUSTEE??

We are looking for local people with a real heart for, and commitment to, helping people to avoid homelessness. We especially need people who can help to organise fundraising events, and who can help us to raise the profile of the charity.

If you are interested in contributing in this way, please contact Maggie (contact details below).



KeySteps

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Beyond the Bond

Newsletter



August 2015

STUDENTS RAISE MONEY FOR KEYSTEPS

We are very grateful to the 6th form students at Weston College who raised £164 by holding a cake sale in support of KeySteps (WDGB).

The students were required to manage a project from start to finish as part of their 6th form BTEC

Subsidiary Diploma in IT studies, and they generously chose to run a series of fundraising events in support of various local charities.



SUCCESS STORIES

The other week Maggie, our Manager, was stopped in the street by a gentleman who had been helped by KeySteps 14 years ago, when he finished a spell in a dry-house in Weston

"I've been dry for the last 14 years, and with the help of your bond I was able to get settled and get myself a job, and I'm very happy now - I just wanted to say thank you".

Marilyn was suffering badly from agoraphobia. She felt unable to leave her home unless she was in the company of someone she trusted completely.

With the help of a KeySteps bond she was able to secure a lovely little flat very close to a small shopping centre and now she is more settled she is able - on a good day - to go to the shops on her own - something most of us would take for-granted.



Matthew Flowers

YATTON MUSIC FESTIVAL

On Wednesday 6th May members of Yatton Methodist Church performed a range of music that included show-tunes, Latin and jazz standards, gospel songs and spirituals, as part of Yatton Music Festival.

Rev Jill Flowers joined the backing singers, and her son Matthew - a talented young vocalist - sang three songs accompanied by

Paul Cummings on piano. Paul also accompanied Julia Williams (tenor saxophone) in a selection of duets, and performed his own solo spot with two delightful accordion musettes. They all enjoyed playing and singing in front of a very appreciative audience.

Afterwards, the musical team kindly donated their fee of £100 to the work of KeySteps. - Many thanks!



Julia Williams

NORTH SOMERSET TIMES BIRTHDAY CAMPAIGN

We are very excited to have been nominated as one of the charities to benefit from the North Somerset Times decision to celebrate 35 years in print by helping to raise funds for 35 community groups and charities.

YATTON SINGERS DONATION

Sadly, after the loss of their conductor, Isabel Cummings, Yatton Singers decided to disband. As Isabel was a founder trustee of KeySteps they donated £774.05 to the charity in her memory. We are sorry about the circumstances, but we are very grateful that they thought of us.

GRANTS AWARDED

Many thanks to the following trusts for their support:

Henry Smith Foundation; Souter Trust; MacRobert Trust; The Olive Tree Trust; Lloyds Foundation; Foyle Foundation; Portishead Nautical Trust; Alliance Homes; Truemark Trust; Beatrice Laing Trust; Trusthouse Charitable Trust Quartet;

FLOATING UPHOLSTERY?

When I first came to work for KeySteps, I thought I was quite well-informed regarding social issues. How wrong I was. The first few weeks were certainly a classic culture-shock for me as I realised I had very little idea of the struggles many people face every day in this country.

It wasn't long before I met my first sofa-surfer - a term I'd never heard before, which immediately conjured up an image of an intrepid sports-person wrangling a chaise-longue through the waves on Weston beach.

30% of the people who come to our drop-in sessions are sofa-surfing...

I soon learned the reality behind the bizarre-sounding term. These the "hidden homeless", who sleep on the sofa - or floor - of a friend, acquaintance, or family member, and who often move frequently, once they have overstayed their welcome.

Having someone to stay for more than a short time can affect the host's own tenancy conditions, housing benefit and council tax situation - not to mention causing overcrowding in a small property. Sofa-surfers are continually at risk of eviction at short notice - just one argument away from sleeping on the street.

When a person ends up sofa-surfing, they cannot keep many belongings and it is easy to lose important documents. They also have difficulty getting references if they apply to private landlords. The private rental sector is often the only alternative for childless adults in this situation.

Sofa-surfing is not limited to people on benefits - people with jobs can also find themselves relying on such living arrangements.

Key causes of people ending up sofa-surfing include family breakdown, where parents have evicted young adults from their home, and relationship breakdown, where the person had previously shared a flat with a partner or spouse.

Forced to turn to whoever can help you out at short notice, with low self-esteem, it can be easy to fall in with people who might encourage you into risky behaviour. Without a structure to your life it is difficult to fulfil the demands of the welfare system.

30% of the people who come to our drop-in sessions are sofa-surfing, while only 10% profess to be sleeping rough. That suggests that three quarters of the homelessness problem in North Somerset is invisible to the general population.

Julia Williams, Administrator