

Happy New Year from all of us at Ivy Street!

Building News!

I was all set to tell you that the building works had started, but there has been a significant bump in the road.

We signed all the agreements on November 2nd and the contractors started clearing the building ready for demolition on November 12th. All appeared to be going well and they cleared out all the rubbish into a skip, but, very very unfortunately, just before Christmas the company went into receivership. We were shocked and so dismayed, as you might imagine, but even more sorry for the employees, who were facing the loss of their jobs just before Christmas.

So, we feel its just another bump in the road to our lovely new building, obviously quite a significant one, but we press on, nevertheless. Our architect partner is in the process of re-appointing contractors, once that is done the works can resume. We are hoping that they will be back on site by Easter.



Growbaby is 5!

For five years we have been collecting, sorting and giving away top quality baby clothes and equipment, in that time we have seen hundreds of families, and given away thousands of items. It has been real honour to serve these families and see what a difference a kind word, some clothes and cup of tea can make to some families.

We celebrated our fifth birthday with a reception at the Florence Bennett Centre attended by lots of the services who refer families to us, Meg Hillier MP, local Councillors, Trustees and supporters. There are too many people to thank but I feel a special mention should be made to

the following:

Croxley Green Baptist Church, who have faithfully supported Ivy Street for over 20 years and now collect clothes, equipment, funding and, to top it off, knit blankets for Growbaby.

Jaguar Building Services who supplied all our white goods to enable us to wash and dry the donations and also support us financially.

Our volunteers who come from the local community and faithfully come in week after week to sort, wash and tidy the never ending supply of donations.

It was so good to celebrate all that we have achieved in the last five years and we are excited to be able to plan what might be possible in our new building with better storage and facilities available to us.



Trips and Events

We took the families on a canal boat trip in September with eight families enjoying the late summer sunshine on the Regent's Canal.

Our annual Christmas events were well attended with around 25 families enjoying our Christmas party, complete with Crazy Cat the Elf Entertainer who kept the little ones busy with singing, magic and balloons for over an hour!



Some of the Mums enjoyed a Christmas meal out at Bill's in Islington, it's always fun to socialise without little ones in tow, and we finished off with a trip to the local Panto in Hoxton Hall, which was enjoyed by all.

New Session

Our Bump to One session which has replaced the dance session on a Tuesday afternoon remains quite quiet, but provides a lovely, relaxed and safe space for parents, carers and babies under one to come and chat, play and make friends. We hope this session will get busier as word gets out.



Toy Appeal

For the fourth year in a row we teamed up with Stokey Parents and the Local Buyers Club to provide 4000 local children with Christmas gifts. It's quite a feat of organisation as you might imagine but we were very blessed this year to have space donated for a week in the basement of Shoreditch Town Hall. There is a unique atmosphere in the basement (apparently Google held their Halloween Party down there) but with Christmas music on the radio and some festive jumpers, we turned it into a haven for all the elves that came to help us!

We had amazing teams throughout the week who came and helped, unpack, sort and distribute the gifts so generously donated by local people. Jenna Fansa, who runs Stokey Parents, brought a crack team of local Mums on the first day who ripped through hundreds of Amazon boxes to unpack the gifts, we then had teams from State Street, Mace and Accenture who all did sterling work in getting those bags filled ready for collection by family support workers, women's refuges, children's centres, schools and homeless hostels.



It was a lot of hard work, but we love to see gifts going out to bless the most vulnerable children in our community.

Celebrating Hackney Women

In celebration of 100 years of women's suffrage, Hackney have selected 100 women, past and present, who have made an impact in Hackney. We were thrilled to find that both Angela and Claire were nominated as 2 of the Hackney 100 Women! Quite an honour for us and a great reflection of the impact that Ivy Street and their other community commitments have had on the local area. Currently the nominated women are only on Twitter with the hashtag #hackneywomen, but we are pressing for a party, so watch this space!

2019

So we greet the new Year with a paused building project, but with full hearts and renewed vision to continue the great work that we have done for so long.

Please pray for:

- * New contractors to be appointed quickly and smoothly
- * Protection over our empty building
- * Good relationships between us, both our staff and the families we serve.

We wish you all a very Happy New Year.



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