

# Christmas 2017 Newsletter

## 'We Are Family': Holistic Help in a Hurting World

The We Are Family project of Alternatives Trust East London gives **HOPE** to pregnant women whose families and lives have completely disintegrated. It provides effective, holistic help in crisis. It helps them build their shattered self-esteem into a new and stable life for themselves so they can look after their children long term. This can take two or three years, but we are constantly encouraged to see **lives transformed by hope**.



It is such a privilege to witness the change in our mothers as they grow from broken beginnings to new-found confidence and emotional stability. To give a small glimpse into the transformative journey that these women travel we wanted to share the following quote from one of our mothers as she reflected on her past year while looking out to sea:

*"Life is beautiful. This time last year I was going to hang myself. I was going to get rid of my pregnancy because I wasn't managing. I didn't want to be here. I had medication. I wanted to die. But now life is beautiful..."*

80% of our families are **HOMELESS** or temporarily housed. Being **HOMELESS** is an exhausting process for anyone especially when your story is tragic and violent. They also face an impossible mountain to climb to get money for their 'leave to remain' application, which costs at least £1,300 plus solicitor's fees.

**ABUSE SURVIVORS:** All the families we deal with have suffered violence or abuse and we are aware of the deep depression and despair many live with, along with fear.

**CHILDREN'S WELLBEING** suffers badly when living with chronically depressed parents who have loads of worries along with virtually no parenting skills and traumatic memories.

We provided over **400 FOOD BAGS** this year, plus almost as many donations of clothes or equipment. We are also experiencing in our Monday WAF group that more and more mums want to learn how to be good parents, and make a break with their past. The teaching slot is taken very seriously by the mums with a good atmosphere of participation and learning. We are now working with around 100 families a year.

Many of our mums receive **FREE COUNSELLING** through our charity. This gives them confidence to talk out their pain from the past and empower them to be successful in the present.

We are very excited by the potential of our **SOCIAL ENTERPRISES**, they offer fantastic opportunities for our mothers to develop their skills and experience, increasing their employability and confidence. We hope to grow all of these and maybe even add some new ones to the list over the next year!

### OUR SOCIAL ENTERPRISES:

- WAF CAF** – A brilliant pop-up café
- WAF CHARITY SHOP** – Our thriving charity shop
- WAF ANGELS** – Cleaning and ironing service
- WAF BUDDIES** – Free support service

**FUNDING:** We are funded entirely by grants and voluntary donations. If you would like to give a donation so that we can keep making a life-changing difference to women who have nothing and no hope, please see below:

- Bank transfer to Barclays, sort code 20-67-88, account number 90268666, account name Alternatives Trust East London.
- By cheque made payable to "Alternatives Trust East London" post to: Alternatives Trust East London, Forrest House, 63 Rowntree Clifford Close, Liddon Road, Plaistow, London E13 8AB.

If you pay tax and would like us to claim Gift Aid, please write or email with your name and address stating, "I want Alternatives Trust East London to treat my donations as Gift Aid donations."

For more information please contact [alternatives@altel.org.uk](mailto:alternatives@altel.org.uk) or 020 7476 8215 or see [www.altel.org.uk](http://www.altel.org.uk)

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