

PLYMOUTH SOUP RUN

July 2018

Food Collectors

Among the numerous Soup Run volunteers are the 'Food Collectors' or 'Picker-upers' who collect food from local businesses and then deliver it to Soup Run prep locations. **Steve Smith** and **Jill Caskey** kindly agreed to share a bit about themselves and what they do...



Steve has been collecting and delivering for the Soup Run for about a year. He was already a volunteer driver,

transporting people to church. Steve wanted to do this because he knew from his own experience what it's like to be without transport. He was also homeless for a short period following the break-up of his marriage. In fact the last few years have been quite a roller-coaster for Steve. He went from having a home, job, car, wife, children and "everything most people could ever want", to losing all of that and being in heavy debt. He even got to the point where he was prepared to take his own life. Then Steve asked God to forgive him and help him; he wasn't a Christian at the time and things didn't change overnight, but his journey of hope began. He contacted Christians Against Poverty (CAP) who, over 4 years, helped him to be debt free. Through CAP, he was also given a 'Discovery' holiday break at Heatree in Devon in 2015, and it was there that he realised how God had answered his prayer and brought him through the turmoil, bringing real peace and happiness. Steve made a

commitment of faith and hasn't looked back. He says he has been challenged in some areas of his life but he definitely doesn't miss tobacco or cannabis. He has a flat, where he lives with his two sons, a steady job, a car and has found a new family of Christians at Hope Baptist Church.

To anyone who feels their situation and life is hopeless, Steve says "Don't give up, there is a way forward. You may not see the light at the end of the tunnel, but with just one spark of faith, the darkness will be gone and life will come".

Jill first heard about the Soup Run through a friend's post on Facebook and thought to herself "I could do that", so she joined the Monday night prep team about 3 years ago. Her son Jack also volunteered as part of his Duke of Edinburgh award. After about 6 months, Jill realised there was a need for a food collector so has been filling that gap for the last two and a half years, as well as helping out in the kitchen when needed. Jill's other volunteering experience has included reading with children in school and is currently Treasurer of the local Scouts and Beavers clubs. "There will always be a need for Soup Run volunteers and I would encourage anyone thinking about it to just do it, even if its just for an hour, or by spreading the word when there's a need for blankets or socks etc". Jill is married with two children and currently works as a consultant promoting safe cleaning products.



Soup Run Map Leaflet Reprint Now Available

The Soup Run map leaflet has now been updated and re-printed. If you would like copies, please send an email to newsletter@plymouthsoup.org.uk.

Summer Soup Run Stops

From 4th June to 2nd September 2018, instead of stopping at Hoe Road Belvedere 'the Wedding Cake', the second Soup Run stop will be outside Shekinah in Bath Street.

Ending homelessness in the UK within ten years

With the right measures in place, that's the conclusion of the landmark report '**Everybody In**' by the charity **Crisis**. The report sets out the exact government policies needed to end homelessness. For the full report visit www.shelter.co.uk.

A community and faith driven service providing free food and hot drinks to homeless, hungry and vulnerable people 365 days a year.

Nextmeal.co.uk

Next Meal is a new database website of local soup kitchens which directs homeless people to their nearest hot meal. The inspiration came through Martin Stone, who leads the Soup Kitchen at Muswell Hill Baptist Church in London. He wondered if the same technology that gave information on the next bus could be used to tell you about the next meal. Next Meal launched in 2017 and is already making an impact, being embraced by homeless people and Londoners alike who want to help those in need.

Instead of giving money to those who are begging, small Next Meal cards can be given directing them to a nearby soup kitchen. The Plymouth section of the website was launched on 5th July, check it out at www.nextmeal.co.uk.

New Multi-Agency Rough Sleeper Team (MARS)

A new team is being set up in Plymouth to tackle rough sleeping. Plymouth City Council, together with Shekinah, the Salvation Army, Plymouth Access to Housing, BCHA and Westward Housing Group, submitted a bid and have been awarded £363,000 by the Government. The project will involve staff going out and encouraging people into temporary emergency accommodation. It will also offer more support via a case worker so rough sleepers can get help to move away from the lifestyles that keep them on the street.

As well as the outreach support, the Council will be working with partners to make more accommodation available. Mike Taylor of Plymouth Access to Housing (PATH) said: "We know a more tailored approach has the

potential to transform people's lives. In the recent bad weather a gentleman who had been living in the woods for a long time came into emergency accommodation; this meant we were able to engage with him more, to start talking to him about his situation and to help."

The funding will also enable the council to provide emergency accommodation for longer during severe weather. Other aspects of the project include expanding the Housing First pilot plan with Plymouth Community Homes, where the people are given support through their tenancy so that they become more settled and better able to live independently in their own homes.



Thrive Plymouth

Save the date: **Tuesday 16th October 2018** (World Food Day): Year 5 Conference '**People Connecting through Food**', at The Marquee, Rolle Plaza, University of Plymouth. Thrive Plymouth is a 10 year programme adopted by Plymouth City Council in 2014 to support people in making healthy choices by encouraging and enabling partners (residents, organisations, institutions) to play a part. Keynote speakers for the conference will be Tom Andrews (Director, Sustainable Food Cities) and Simon Platten (Project Manager, Tamar Grow Local). Also: Celebrating Thrive Plymouth Year 4, Get involved, Creative Breakout Sessions, Networking, and lunch. For more information visit www.plymouth.gov.uk/publichealth/thriveplymouth.

StreetVet

This award-winning initiative from the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons is a registered practice delivering free care to the homeless and their dogs. It began in London and now also operates in Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge and Plymouth (with the Monday Hope Baptist team). They also plan to work with other organisations where dogs may regularly accompany vulnerable adults (eg Mutley's Gaffer's Café). For more information visit www.streetvet.co.uk.

Dear God

Thank you that you know everything and You hear all our prayers.
Help us to trust you and to always thank you.

Amen.