

Spring News from HTSE

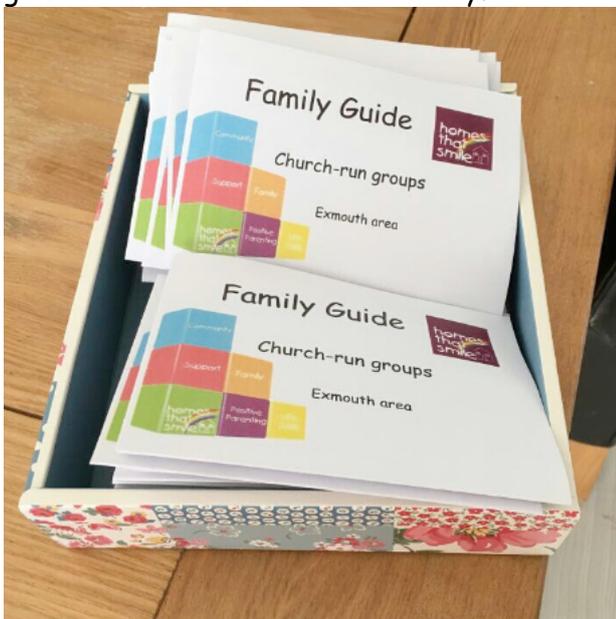


Dear Friends & Supporters,

As you can imagine the crisis we are all coping with has shut down our normal face to face activities, but there is still some good news to share.

Tesco Blue Tokens

When Homes That Smile Exmouth were selected for the scheme, we went to talk to in store community champion. Having explained what we did, a good link was made with her. 3 volunteers spent 2 hours on February the 14th, handing out our information along with red roses! As a result two more families have support from us. Jane T fronted this as I could not go. She also put together a guide to church activities for children in Exmouth. 50 guides were handed out on the day.



We will have to print some more for future contacts. Also we will be giving information packs to a number of churches who require them.

The blue token scheme finished just as the lock down started. Under these unique circumstances, we have decided to use the funds generated by this scheme to assist families with severe and sudden income loss. So far, families and some young people have received FOOD SHARE, Co-op gift cards and some receipted cash. These are mostly parents who work hard in shops, restaurants hotels and garages. They are contacts via youth and family workers or ones we know directly.

I am grateful for the help we have received from volunteers and family workers like Chrissie, Kay from Brixington, Janet from Littlemead and Sue from Church on the Green for their support. We have helped 17 families: 3 of these are new and 2 are renewed contacts. One lady texted and said she was unsure how she was going to feed her family the night before receiving help. She said it showed you had to have faith. Please pray that we will have ongoing links, and that families will open their hearts up to the Lord's care.

Family Support

Before the lock down, we managed to Support four new families. Two of these Have ongoing friendships with volunteers. One has received some craft materials for her family, as they all enjoy home based activities. One of these needed help with exam preparation so Siobhan stepped in to provide this. John has been helping a 14 year old to learn carpentry skills and his confidence has improved so that he is making things at home in his own "Man shed".

FOOD SHARE has been given out. This is usually bread or veg that has not been sold in time at the small Tesco stores.

This is not something we want to get bogged down in doing, as it is time consuming. We usually just put out items on a Thursday. But actually the distribution has been very helpful to families without their normal

income. One Mum, we have known since 2013 has been picking up food and taking it round to several families. We are grateful how this has happened and just when doing it ourselves was a problem. Another friend has taken some food to parents in need, who she helps at a church based group.

Coffee and Play

With no groups and social distancing in force we recorded videos from home and have uploaded them to the Homes That Smile face book page. Please take a look if you can. This was suggested by one of the Mums at the group and we have uploaded some other videos since.



The teddies had a special bacon roll at home



The craft activity was demonstrated
We even had our usual singing time on line.
Thanks everyone for all the efforts in this.

EASTER

There were prizes for Easter Gardens made by some children we know

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Bank Account Details
Sort code 40-20-32
Account number 41555871



We have a Whats App group chats and Face time other parents.
We are aware of heightened levels of anxiety in several people and hope to be reassuring but also talk about the peace we can know because our future is in Christ.

PLANS

On May 18th there was going to be a workshop for parents on Mental health awareness. This is in Mental health Awareness week and we have Matt Merriman from Woodbury Christchurch facilitating it. But this is unlikely to happen now. We may make a digital taster and then run it later.

SUMMER

We will plan some more picnics in the parks. Lets pray we can do this and the work shop.



I am so grateful for all the support we have flexibility shown by the Homes That Smile Team. See you all soon.

Becky