



Farewell to Penny

Volunteer Penny Dean who has been a Furniture Station Volunteer for some 13 years comments on her time at The Furniture Station as she ends her time with us.

Thirteen years ago we as a family started going to Hazel Grove Baptist Church, and eventually in the same year moved into the Hazel Grove Area.

While attending Church I felt that I would like to become more involved in Community Projects and one of them was the very new Furniture Project. Julie Want, was then one of the office volunteers and she encouraged me to sit with her on a Monday morning in the office to learn the ropes. This very quickly led me to become the Monday Office Volunteer for the Furniture Station.



Penny Dean.

I had been office trained in my younger days, so everything came naturally. I had the honour of working with dear Olive Lord, who, used to show people around the furniture. Sadly Olive died last year, and there was a massive void in the Furniture Station, but, her memory lives on.

Monday mornings were always very hectic, the phone non-stop ringing, people attending the appointments and people booking in furniture, it was buzzing and still is. I first worked in what we called the glass office in the Church Reception Area, and then as the Church building was being re-developed we moved into the foyer area where we worked from a tiny office there. That was quite funny really because in that office there was a glass sliding window, and I am only a small lady so I could not see out of it to speak to customers!! The very next time I came into work a very kind gentleman (who shall remain nameless) had made me a wooden platform to stand on. It was great and I think everyone used it. I will always have some very fond memories of my time at the Furniture Station, meeting so many very varied customers from all walks of life. My heart went out to all of them. There were

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Sign Choir Bring Christmas songs and Carols to Life in aid of Charity

There was a Christmas Special with a difference at Hazel Grove Baptist Church on Saturday 12 December at 7.30pm. The Sign Choir used Sign Language to interpret a variety of Christmas songs and carols. As well as making the evening accessible to people who are deaf the Choir provided an entertaining spectacle for all as they animated the songs with sign language.

Over 200 people attended, there was no charge for tickets but donations in aid of The Furniture Station totalled £688.

The Sign Choir has been in existence for 4 years and has 16 members, it now includes a Junior section with some children as young as 5 involved. This was one of a number of events they performed during the build up to Christmas.



The Furniture Station is a registered charity which aims to help disadvantaged people in Stockport by providing them with good quality re-used furniture and white goods. Many people going into accommodation cannot afford to buy the items they need to make a house into a home, like the young mother who had nothing and received furniture, a cooker and a cot for her new baby. The project also ensures that many items, which would otherwise end up in landfill, continue to have a useful life.

Visit the web site to find out more www.furniturestation.org.uk

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Bid to John Lewis Cheadle and Trafford Community Committee

THE Furniture Station was short listed by the John Lewis Community Committee for consideration as its 2010 Charity of the year, one of four Local charities on the short list.

Chair Billy Montgomery and Fundraiser Mike Atkinson went along to The John Lewis Service Centre at Stanley Green on 2 December to make a presentation and to show the DVD made by BellyFlop TV about our work. The presentation went well and although we were not chosen as the main Charity for 2010 the Committee were impressed by our work and decided to

make a generous donation of £3,500 towards the purchase of new beds for clients. This was a tremendous boost as we are always short of beds and one of our clients' greatest needs is the ability to get a good nights sleep in a proper bed. The donation has given us a great start towards our target of £7,000 to buy beds in 2010.

We were very grateful for the opportunity to bid and think it is great that John Lewis Partners are so keen to support local charities to this extent.

Warehouse Development/ Renovation



FOLLOWING a day organised by BITC (Business in the Community) at the CIS Tower in Manchester during Pro Bono Week in late 2009, Jennings Design Associates and subsequently JBH Consulting have been assisting The Furniture Station with drawing up schedules for refurbishment of the warehouse, which visitors and clients will know has a leaking roof and a very unattractive interior. This support has been invaluable, particularly as it has been on a pro bono basis to date. A proposal for a rebuild has also been drawn up for consideration. With the rebuild costs coming in at over £600,000 that is likely to be a very long term project and the refurbishment 'menu' will be the first priority. With costs as high as £190,000 if all items are completed this will be a medium term project. Initially the roof needs to be secured and then work can be undertaken on the interior to provide a better environment for the storage and display of the furniture. The funding provided by The Mayor's Charity last year has been placed in a development fund to contribute towards this project. We will also be working with the Landlords and all our supporters to raise further funding towards the work.



Service Statistics for 2009

Referrals were marginally up on 2008 (1365) at 1376 due to unprecedented demand on our service and the need to avoid long waiting list for appointments we had to stop referrals for two weeks in November.

Delivery trips – 1141 included 3861 separate items (4386 in 2008)

Collections trips – 2145 to pick up a total of 4229 items (4464 in 2008)

Service questionnaire results

All clients are asked to complete a questionnaire when they come for appointments to choose furniture 630 (74%) did so with the following outcomes

Quality of Service from Staff and Volunteers

Efficiency – Excellent 86%, Good 12%, Fair 2%

Friendliness – Excellent 90%, Good 9%, Fair 1%

Accessibility and appropriate service

Referral process – Excellent 70%, Good 28%, fair 2%

Premises Accessibility – Excellent 66%, Good 31% Fair 2%, Poor 1%

Range and quality of goods – Excellent 56%, Good 37%, Fair 6%, Poor 1%

Type of property and owner

Property – House 33%, flat 55%, Tower block 12%

Tenure – Stockport Homes 66%, Housing Association 16%, Private landlord 17%, Owner Occupier 1%

Occupancy

Adults 62% (763), Child >5 years 23% (278), Child < 5yrs 21% (258)

Ethnicity

White 91%, Mixed 3%, Asian/Asian British 2%, Black/Black British 3%, Chinese/Other Ethnic 1%

Referral Agencies

Stockport Homes 46%, Stockport Direct 14%, Social Services 16%, Health Services 12%, Housing Associations 3%, Others 9%

The Furniture Station has joined the newly Launched FLAG Consortium

A new independent service launched in Stockport in January, which will help people find out about all the adult health and social care services in the borough. FLAG (For Local Advice and Guidance) is a project of Synergy Stockport and is part of a voluntary sector consortium; ensuring local residents have easy access to information and advice and about all the services in Stockport. There are a wide range of services available, helping individuals and families maintain healthy and active lives, as well as supporting people when times become difficult. Many of these services are provided by the voluntary sector. FLAG has trained advisors who will be holding regular information sessions across the borough, where Advisors can provide one to one support,

signposting people to the services or specialist information they need. They can also refer clients directly to The Furniture Station using the new referral system.

To use this free service, you can either call in or make an appointment, at the new Town Centre base on Chestergate, or alternatively meet with a FLAG advisor at the one of the many outreach sessions which will be held across Stockport. Details of these sessions will be posted on our website www.stockportflag.org.uk, also look out for notices in local venues. Or email info@stockportflag.org.uk or telephone the helpline number which is 0161 474 1042.

case study

A young single mother aged 25, previously lived in a hostel and had been offered a flat but had no furniture and so had to find a furnished private tenancy – she was there for 6 months and could not afford the rent and so eventually was offered a Stockport Homes tenancy, she moved in, managing with some borrowed items. She received an emergency delivery from The Furniture Station and 3 weeks later she had a Furniture Station

appointment to choose furniture. She was able to get a 3 piece suite, a wardrobe, a chest of drawers and a mattress, all delivered for only £27.50, which she described as great value.

She was accompanied on her visit to The Furniture Station by her Social Worker who said it was a marvellous service, helping families struggling with establishing a home. The client said 'It is brilliant really good quality'

The Luncheon Club

The Luncheon Club teams, which provide an excellent two course meal for the elderly, every other Wednesday at Hazel Grove Baptist Church generously agreed to provide a Christmas meal for the Furniture Staff and Volunteers in December. The team catered for over 100 on the day and the excellent food was welcomed by the Furniture Station team members who all had a great time. Thanks to all the Luncheon Club volunteers.

Waitrose 'Community Matters scheme'

The Furniture Station has been chosen as one of 3 local charities to benefit from the Waitrose Cheadle Hulme 'Community Matters scheme' during April 2010. Shoppers are asked to place a green token in one of three collection bins, choosing the one for the charity they would like to support and at the end of the month the 3 charities share £1000 based on the proportion of the total tokens in their bin. Last time the Furniture Station was chosen to benefit from this scheme we received £300.

Collecting from a wider area

We were experiencing difficulties with a shortage of donations of furniture and so we started to collect from a wider area, including Macclesfield and Wilmslow. This has proved positive and we have now made 50 collections outside the Stockport boundaries. We will continue to promote the opportunity for people from these areas to donate furniture and white goods.

Trainee Ashley Lawley who joined us last year has been working on the van collecting and delivering furniture, working with the referral system to ensure all data is updated and printed as needed for day to day operation and has undertaken training to allow him to drive the vans.



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the families who were so grateful for any piece of furniture you could give them, there were young mums, older mums, young couples older couples, lonely people. They all had one thing in common, and that was just to have someone take time with them and help them in their time of need. I was very humbled and proud to have played a part in helping these people. There were sad times and also happy times. Some of the situations that people were in were unbelievable, and it was hard to think how they even survived their situations at times.

I am a Christian and I thank God that places like the Furniture Station are in place. I have worked with some great people; we have had some great laughs. The time has gone so quickly and I am sure that the Furniture Station will grow from strength to strength in serving the community.

This year has been a time of change for me, and I felt it was now time to move on to new adventures. For anyone wanting to volunteer in a project that helps people in need, I would encourage them to do so.

Thanks Penny, we could not run the Furniture Station without the input of our Volunteers, they contribute over 3000 hours each year to help us meet the needs of our clients and keep our costs low.

Be a fund raiser for The Furniture Station

You can help to raise funds for The Furniture Station by using Every Click as your browser home page. Each time you use the browser to do a search on the internet a contribution is made to The Furniture Station. We are currently getting about £5 a month from people using Every Click, the more people who use it the more we will receive. You can access the browser by going to the following link. www.everyclick.com/mike-atkinson. If any one has any fundraising ideas or would like to organise a fundraising event for The Furniture Station please contact Mike on 0161 483 9010.

Fundraising news

Since our last newsletter funding has been received from **The Coutts Charitable Trust (£500)**, **The Dulverton Trust £2000**, **The Sir Cliff Richard Charitable Trust (£500)**, **The Zochonis Charitable Trust (£1800)**, **The Manchester Airport Community Trust Fund (£700 for the purchase of tools and equipment for the White Goods Project)**, **The Thomas Wall Trust (£1125 for beds)**, **The Souter Charitable Trust**

(£1000), **The John Lewis Cheadle and Trafford Community Committee (£3500 for beds)**, **The Clara E Burgess Charity (£2000 for cots)**, **Barnabas Charitable Trust (£500 for beds)**. These sums mean we reached our target for funding of new beds for 2009 and are well on the way with our 2010 target and we have had generous help with other aspects of the operation.

Our budget for 2010 is currently showing a deficit of £31,000 so there is a need to focus on fundraising to support the operational costs if we are to get to the end of the year without needing to call on reserves to meet this deficit.

Fundraiser/Administrator Mike Atkinson has given notice that he will be stepping down in September so the Trustees are currently reviewing the role to help in taking decisions on recruiting a replacement.



Furniture Station Supporters group

The Supporters Group was established some 6 years ago to provide important regular income to support some of the running costs of The Furniture Station, the group has grown to include over 50 people and now provides over £10,000 a year, which is made up by Gift Aid from the Government to over £12,000. Many small but regular contributions can make



all the difference to ensuring the Furniture Station continues to deliver the vital support to its clients. Current Supporters Group members

are all individuals contributing from as little as £2.50 a month (meeting the average fuel cost for a furniture delivery) but we would welcome any Business or organizational members.

To become a member of the supporters group please complete and return the form below or contact Mike Atkinson on 0161 483 9010 or by email on mike@furniturestation.org.uk for further details.

DONOR / MEMBERSHIP FORM

Yes - I would like to donate by standing order/ one-off donation* to the work of The Furniture Station.

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone

Email

*One-off donation of £

BANKERS ORDER FORM

Please return this form to The Furniture Station not to your Bank/Building Society.

To Bank/Building Society.

Address & Postcode (of bank)

Please pay to the account of The Furniture Station Supporters' Group at Barclays Bank PLC, 63 Stamford New Road, Altrincham WA14 1DR, code 20-01-96 Account Number 60155462 the sum of £5 £10 Other (monthly)

tick as appropriate from (date of 1st payment)/...../20..... until

otherwise ordered; debiting my/our account number

Date Usual signature

Gift Aid - Increase your gift by 28%

I am a UK tax-payer and I would like the Furniture Station to treat this gift and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise as a Gift Aid Donation.

Signature Date

Please return this form to The Furniture Station, Dept (AG), Hazel Grove Baptist Church, Hazel Grove, Stockport, Cheshire SK7 4EX.

The Furniture Station would like to send you information on its activities. Please tick the box if you do not want to receive this information.



A partnership scheme between:

