

HELLO & GOODBYE...



The last month or so has turned out to be a time of encouragement but also a somewhat emotional one for us all at gap*

Encouragingly, we find ourselves saying hello to Rob Jones (*pictured left*), our new part-time Youth Worker. Rob's responsibilities include mentoring, running of Venue with a focus on the gap* Studio and re-introducing our detached Street Work. Let's hear from Rob... "I've just finished a degree in youth work and have come from being a youth worker at a church in Leicester. My roles included mentoring young people as well as working with those experiencing mental health issues. I have an interest in music and have done recording with young people as well as helping them to set up concerts.

I am engaged to the wonderful Adele (currently studying on a Christian Youth Ministry course) and we are due to be married in November. We are currently looking for a flat near to Sutton Coldfield as, at the

moment, I am having to commute from Derby. I am already embedded in the work of the gap* and actively involved with all they do. I'm particularly excited about the detached youth work which the gap* used to run in it's early days. In Leicester I had been part of a detached team working on a Youth Bus and feel that this experience will benefit the gap*'s desire to re-start this initiative." We are all really excited to have Rob, and his array of talents, onboard.



Against the blessings we have in Rob starting with us, very sadly, we find ourselves having to say goodbye to the lovely Hannah Hughes. She and her husband, Sam (also a volunteer for the Venue) feel it is time for them to move on and have been offered jobs with a new youth project in Halesowen. Hannah began with the gap* in 2012 and,

amongst other things, she has been the main catalyst for the HeadSpace project, which she initiated and which has grown extensively over the past year. Her passion for young people and her creative gifts have given the gap* a much welcomed image boost especially with our female visitors. Hannah will be officially leaving us at the end of July. Whilst we wish them every blessing and success with the next leg of their journey, we know that Hannah, especially, will be very much missed by staff, volunteers, young people, parents and gap* associates alike. We thank God for her time with us.



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After a lengthy time, the gap* Studio is finally ready to go! The day to day running of the fully kitted out studio will be overseen by Rob with engineering duties being undertaken by the very enthusiastic Chris, a student at Wolverhampton Uni. The studio is free to use by anyone 12-18 years old and sessions can be booked through Rob on **07462 306177**.

On the volunteer front we welcome Andrew to our ranks. Andrew, who will be volunteering at Venue on Mondays, has a background in mentoring young people and is looking to do some of that work as well as one-to-one support work as part of his role. We are more than happy to have another male volunteer with us.



In saying goodbye to Hannah (see over), we are also, with much regret, having to say goodbye to her husband, Sam. He has been volunteering at Venue for some months but has also been the provider of much technical support for all the gap* events, supplying lights and sound. At Venue he has regularly provided the music soundtracks and much more whilst holding down a demanding role as a church young people's worker. It's a fact, we will definitely miss his smiley face!!

SUPER SUPPORTERS EVENING

In May we hosted our third Supporter's Evening at the fabulous Oikos Cafe in Erdington. Over 75 people attended and a great evening that included food and live music was enjoyed by all. Trustee and volunteer, Christine, was acknowledged for her five years of service to the gap*.....the rest of this glittering event is summed up nicely in the photos below courtesy of Sam Hughes.



Once again we had some very dedicated, lovely people undertake the gruelling Great Midland Fun Run on behalf of the gap*.



Mike, Reuben, Sam, Mim and Marc all chose to run the 8.5 mile course on a sunny Sunday morning...all completing their task admirably. We also had five others acting as marshalls for the day. The GMFR is a regular part of the gap*'s calendar and we are always seeking to encourage more people to run or be marshalls so as to raise much needed funds from this great local family event. Why not get in touch with us if you fancy doing it in 2018!

HOW WE HELP...

genuine stories from the young people we work with....

Jess had grown up in Erdington with no positive role models in her her. Her mum was an alcoholic so home life was generally chaotic. She was in Foster Care from the age of 13. The only influences around her were negative, gangs, drugs, and generally getting into trouble and making some bad choices.



At 15 she was put on a Princes Trust Course to try and modify her behaviour when schools couldn't cope with her. When she was 17 her mum passed away and her lifestyle continued to spiral with her nearly ending up in prison with many people seeming to give up on her. By this time she was in independent living and had found herself a partner.

It was also around this time that her sister mentioned that she attended the gap*'s Venue drop-in. Jess found it 'somewhere to be' and that the people who ran it were 'on the level'.

After attending for some months she approached us to say she needed to make some serious life changes. She was now on medication for her mental health, which was helping to stabilise her. She felt she needed to get her functional skills sorted as she had missed a lot through not attending school. Jess became a student on the gap*'s AdaptED project and has been working on her Maths for a few months. She would like to get qualified and do some kind of practical job... In the long term she would like to work helping young people.