



summer 2009



New challenges, new look, **same passion**

EVERYTHING'S CHANGING. Schools are transforming their buildings, their curriculum and their timetables. Young people are living as much in the online world as in the physical one. Culture and attitudes are being shaped by global events. Teenage life in Luton is being transformed before our eyes.

This isn't simply about a new gadget or fashion trend, it's a fundamental change in attitudes, approaches and actions. And God isn't excluded from what's happening either. Despite the fact that young people are intrigued by spirituality, a UK survey last month discovered that two thirds of teenagers no longer believe in God and think that family, friends, money, music and even reality television are more important than faith.



We have to change too. If we don't then, as the philosopher Eric Hoffer put it, we will find ourselves, **'beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.'**

As an organisation with a clear mission to young people in our town, we want to commit ourselves to making that change. Same faith, but adapting to the radically different world we find ourselves in.

We have a new logo and a new website, but this is a much deeper and more important journey. If you share our passion, join us in finding out where it leads.

lost and found?

🔴 One teenager's story about being in care in Luton

“LCET has impacted incredibly on who I am now...They made me realise that not everything in life is bad.”

IMAGINE BEING TAKEN FROM YOUR FAMILY WITHOUT WARNING AT 11, moved into a strangers home and told that this is where you will stay. You have no idea what is going on, no one will tell you anything, and you're not allowed to see your family. This idea can seem so alien to us, yet for thousands of young people, this is an everyday reality. LCET has worked in Luton with children in the care system for over 15 years and is determined to show these young people that they deserve to be cared for. LCET recently sat down with Sarah, (not her real name) ... to discuss her experiences of being in care and look at the impact that LCET has had on her life.

🔴 Can you describe what growing up in care was like?

Well, during my time in care, about 7 years, I moved to 15 or 16 placements. I first went into care when I was 11 years old. It was hard because I didn't get to see my family and it broke up relationships between them and me. And then I found it harder because all of a sudden I was in a stranger's home, and I was new to the country. I'd only been here for two or three years and didn't even know that something like social services and foster carers existed. Going into a strangers house was difficult, it was tough getting to know new people, and when you don't get on with them they move you immediately on to the next home, so I could never feel secure or settle down. I moved to Luton from London and went to Halyard High School (now Barnfield West Academy) but had to get buses, taxis or lifts depending on where I was living in Luton at the time.

🔴 What was it like going into care in the first place?

A few words that I can think of are: hard, strange, alien and not adaptable. I was originally told that I would be going home the next day, but then time went on and then solicitors got involved.



I think after my first placement, I was there for a year and a half. When I went to my second placement, I started to realise that this was going to be my life. But you have no choice other than to adapt to it.

• **When did you first get in contact with LCET?**

Well, when I was growing up I just felt like nobody cared about me. One day when I was in year eight, I went into the church across the road from my school because I felt like there might be someone there that could care for me. LCET were doing camps and activity days and I was invited along to them. They were fun, an escape and a chance to be with friends and get a holiday. I got to learn a lot about God as well, and meet lots of people who work for LCET – who are all mad! I got to see a different side of people when on camp, and that helped me to decide to commit my life to God at the same time.

• **How has LCET helped you cope with being in care?**

I've just done an independent living course with LCET, because I was going to get a flat and they helped to train me to learn about independent life more. I learned about budgeting money, how to pay electricity and what to do food wise – even where to get the cheapest food from. When I started the course, I was a bit panicky, I didn't know a lot and was a bit scared, but the course has given me confidence to start off on my own. Now I feel a strong, confident and fun person.

LCET has impacted incredibly on who I am now. Meeting the team has made me realise there is a lot more about people I didn't realise, and that there are lots more things to explore in the world. They made me realise that not everything in life is bad. Looking to the future now I feel good, that I can get somewhere. I'm going to be a cruise ship beauty therapist, working and getting to cruise around, seeing the world at the same time. If anyone is struggling in care, or with any other problems, they should come to LCET. Even when I'm 25 I want to be invited to your camps!

Listen to Sarah and others talk about being in care and see some of the artwork they created as part of one of our LCET projects at www.lcet.org/see_me.

LCET's work with young people in care

1. Small group programmes in schools to help young people cope with the emotional and social impact of being in care.
2. Independent living course for young people who are leaving care and starting out on their own.
3. Art projects to help express some of the issues of being in care.
4. Summer camps, weekends away and the b.1 cafe.

We work in depth with 40 young people in care every year.

SUMMER CAMPS 2009



Dent the Universe (27th - 29th July)

Our camp for those 14 and over, is packed full of crazy activities and a posh three course meal! We'll be exploring the difference faith can make to our lives and the impact that we can have on the world around us.



The Big Reveal (1st - 4th August)

LCET's summer camp for 11 to 14's will be at the Spec Centre in London Colney. For many of the young people, this is their first experience of one of our camps, having met us in school or attended the b.1 cafe! It's a chance for them to have fun, make new friends, look at issues they face and explore faith for themselves.



getting religion?

YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCHOOLS

often talk about having a sense of something spiritual. They may not know how to articulate it, to box it, to understand it, but they know that there is more to life than they can see and know; something bigger than themselves.

We hear teenagers talking about belief in an afterlife or a frustration as to why there is so much rubbish in the world. Often their understanding of God is shaped by how, if he does exist, he could let Nan die, or Kate dump me. This search for something more, seems to be an inherent part of who they are. They recognise another unfathomable aspect to life.

It is this passive search for an extra dimension to life that the chaplaincy team try to engage with. Taking young people from where they are, their role is to help them articulate their questions and begin to look for answers to turn the passive questions into an active search. This is when young people can discover something of their own journey of faith, their own belief about life and God and something amazing can start to happen in their soul.

Does everyone have a spiritual side

LCET's chaplaincy work in schools

1. School assemblies sharing faith and exploring the big spiritual questions from a Christian point of view.
2. RE lessons giving input on Christians topics like 'Do you have a spiritual side?', 'Is God big-headed to ask for worship?' and 'Pilgrims Progress'.
3. Special projects like an upcoming plan to create an advent themed event in every Luton school in the final weeks on next term.
4. Informal pastoral work, being around in school to answer questions and work with students.

We work with 8,000 young people in school every year

LCET's 2009 annual service is on Sunday September 20th, 7pm, at St Mary's Luton with Rev Stephen Gaukroger

