

news



"My son asks when we are going to music every day!"

When words fail, music speaks.

Daniel was an extremely shy and withdrawn four year old when he first came to our music therapy service. Sadly Daniel had been terribly abused by his father, leaving him almost mute, unable to express himself, to trust adults or other children. Daniel's school had referred him to us, as he had been recently taken into care and had become more and more introverted.

During the first few sessions of therapy, Daniel regressed in behaviour and acted very much like a toddler – the age he was when he had been abused. By the fifth music therapy session Daniel felt safe enough to re-enact his father's abuse through music. Using the instruments to try and show what happened, he was hitting the piano with a drum in an attempt to express his pain.

Whilst Daniel still has some way to go his teachers have already reported a difference in his behaviour confirming that he has been talking and playing more with other children. Daniel's foster parents also say he is far less introverted and has started to

develop a real bond with them, showing more affection.

Music therapy is just one of the ways we work with children and their families to help them develop and thrive. Music has been a constant theme in Coram's work, from the days of the Foundling Hospital brass band to our therapeutic sessions and music day. We believe music is a powerful tool for expression and can dramatically help children to cope better with their lives and begin to overcome their difficulties.

A Coram music therapy session with Tiffany and Jade.



Tackling the causes of truancy and school exclusion

Absence from school can have huge consequences for young children. Truants and children who have been excluded are more likely to leave school with no qualifications, to commit a crime and to slip into drug use. Those excluded from school are also 90% more likely to end up living on the streets.

As a response to this situation Coram is developing a new service called Transitions to address the issues linked to school absence that ultimately lead to educational underachievement

and social and economic disadvantage in later life.

Transitions is a school-based programme aimed at supporting children aged 11–14 years who are displaying behavioural and attendance issues, low self-esteem and poor personal and social skills. A range of group activities will be used, which are designed to enable children to build personal, interpersonal and teamwork skills, community awareness, citizenship, health and well being and an understanding of the world of work. The programme includes support for parents, to encourage them to get more involved in their children's education.

We are currently trying to get funding for this service and look forward to updating you in future newsletters.



Absence from school can have huge consequences.

Christmas messages mean the world

“You have no idea what it's like to spend Christmas on your own without friends or family. The Coram staff are great and took us all out for a Christmas dinner, but on Christmas Day itself the house was really lonely. My mum was supposed to pick me up and take me to hers for the day but cancelled at the last minute. I couldn't believe she had let me down again. It might sound funny to you, but the messages on the baubles made me feel like people cared.....”

Dan and Lauren reading messages of support from Coram donors.



Over Christmas we asked you to support our Housing & Support Service which provides practical and emotional help to young people leaving care and those at risk of homelessness. We received an unprecedented response and are pleased to say that this has been one of our most successful appeals to date – thanks to your kindness.

Many of you sent a message of support for a young person on a Christmas bauble with your donation. These were displayed in Coram's reception and in our houses. They meant a great deal to the young people spending Christmas away from their families.

Young parents highlight concerns about knife crime



Coram young parents interviewing Tony Brooks.

On Monday 8th December four of our young parents went to Camden Town Hall to interview Tony Brooks, Assistant Director of Community Safety for Camden.

The young parents are taking part in the Introduction to Filmmaking course, and are working on a film about knife crime and community safety. They chose to interview someone in authority in Camden about these topics as they felt they were of great concern to young people and parents like themselves.

The interview took place in the Mayor's parlour, which the Mayor of Camden had generously allowed us to use. Mr Brooks responded openly to the questions and discussed his thoughts on knife crime, including its causes and ways to prevent it. We hope to show the final film at the end of March.

Coram's 270th anniversary



Edward Bonham Carter of Jupiter, HRH Princess Alexandra, Lord Young and Carol Homden of Coram.

As many of you will already know, Coram (previously known as The Foundling Hospital) was established in 1739 by the philanthropist Thomas Coram with help from two major figures in British history, the artist William Hogarth and the composer George Frideric Handel.

Handel was a supporter of The Foundling Hospital, giving regular benefit performances of Messiah in the Hospital chapel to raise significant sums of money to support the children. In addition to this he made the Hospital a beneficiary of his will.

On Thursday 14th January Coram kick-

started the celebrations of our 270th year with a private viewing of the Handel the Philanthropist exhibition at the Foundling Museum followed by a champagne reception. The event was attended by HRH Princess Alexandra, Lord Young and the Mayor of Camden, and was supported by Jupiter Asset Management. It was a wonderful evening with a performance from some young members of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

At the event, Lord Young formally began his role as Coram's President. A retired politician and businessman, Lord Young serves in many voluntary capacities and has a lifelong concern for promoting the interests and development of young people and those experiencing disadvantage.

Creating employment opportunities through community volunteering

Coram recently received funding from V, an independent charity aiming to inspire a new generation of volunteers aged 16 – 25 years. This has enabled us to recruit a volunteer co-ordinator to work closely with our young people and young parents to encourage them into new volunteering roles.

The young people will learn new skills to enable them to move more easily into employment, whilst also benefiting their local communities. To facilitate this scheme we will be working in partnership with local businesses as well as the Foundling Museum and the British Museum with whom we have close links. The museums will provide opportunities for young people to take part in work placements as Visitor Assistants, shadowing gallery staff and those on information desks.

One of the first volunteers through the programme, Hasina Khanom, was recently offered paid employment at the British Museum after completing the 16 week training and work programme.

Adam, Rema and Gee outside Coram's Community Campus.



Coram feature on Radio 4



Concurrent planning.

Coram's Concurrent Planning service was featured on BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour on Tuesday 11th November. Concurrent Planning is a specialist adoption/fostering service that places children at risk with foster families who will then go on to adopt the child if needed.

Concurrent Planning aims to ensure that the child is given as much stability and reassurance as possible and is not disrupted by movement from foster carer to foster carer.

Woman's Hour featured Rosemary, a young woman whose son was placed with a Coram foster carer as soon as he was born. Rosemary was addicted to alcohol and crack cocaine and Social Services were extremely worried about her son's safety. Coram settled her child with his foster carers and then started assessing Rosemary to see if she was able to change her life enough in order to have her son placed back with her.

Thankfully Rosemary was determined to change: "I was ready to change so I knew I could do it...Coram was brilliant...they got me in touch with a drug related councillor and an alcohol advisor... The day the judge told me I was getting him back I couldn't believe it... at the end of it it's made me a better person... I couldn't ask for a better kid."

To listen to the programme again please visit http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/02/2008_46_tue.shtml

Leave something for a little someone



Mother and child attending one of Coram's services.

Coram would like to see a world where all children can grow up in safe and loving families. With your help we can achieve this.

We recently sent some of our most committed supporters a leaflet talking about legacies and how they can remember Coram in their Will, should they wish to. For those supporters that have already included Coram in their Will, or intend to, we have provided a pledge card which will allow us to thank them properly. If you have left a gift to Coram in your Will and did not receive this mailing, please do write to us so that we can thank you as well!!!

This year Coram has received legacies ranging from £500 to £167,000 – all, whatever their size, are invaluable to us.

Thomas Coram's legacy has allowed Coram to help some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children in the country. A legacy from you will ensure that Coram can remain a lifeline for generations to come.

Names of Coram service users have been changed to protect their privacy.

Thank you for your commitment - we can only continue to make a difference with your support.

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www.coram.org.uk fundraising@coram.org.uk

The Thomas Coram Foundation for Children (registered charity no. 312278) was established by Royal Charter in 1739.

Dates for the diary



David Leech, Coram 2008 marathon runner.

Handel's Messiah, Petersham Tuesday 14th April 8pm

Hear one of Handel's most powerful works on the actual 250th anniversary of his death in aid of Coram. The event takes place in the atmospheric Georgian setting of St Peter's Church. Tickets are £25 from the box office 0844 586 7644.

London Marathon Sunday 26th April

15 intrepid runners are taking part this year including our very own Hardey Barnett from Coram's Family Drug and Alcohol Court. If you'd like to sponsor Hardey visit www.justgiving.com/hardeybarnett.

Remember a Charity event Monday 11th May 12 – 2pm

Find out more about Coram and leaving a gift in your Will during a special event at the Foundling Museum. Please contact Rachael Corns on 020 7520 0329 or rachael@coram.org.uk to reserve a place. Partners and friends are welcome and a free lunch will be provided.

Bupa 10k London Monday 25th May

Join our team for this fantastic 10k run and help raise vital funds and awareness for Coram. Please contact David on 020 7520 0330 or davidm@coram.org.uk for further information.

Handel at Cadogan Hall Thursday 9th July 7.30pm

In support of Coram, The London Concert Choir will perform Handel's Foundling Hospital Anthem in the intimate setting of Cadogan Hall, London. Tickets are from £12 from the box office 020 7730 4500.

News update



The Woods family with Carol Homden on The Voyage.

Maiden voyage

This gala reception on board the stylish Silver Sturgeon was organised by our Governor Alan Woods and his family. The event was extremely successful and raised £41,000, twice the intended target. Many thanks to them for a wonderful night.

Gala Cinderella Operetta

The Cinderella Operetta organised by Michael Nyman at the Foundling Museum in October was a very lovely evening and raised almost £30,000 which is fantastic. Attendees included a surprise appearance from actor Danny Dyer.

Questionnaire competition winner

Some time ago we sent out a questionnaire to our supporters to find out more about what you think of the communications you receive from Coram and what motivated you to support us. Thanks to everyone who completed and returned the questionnaires – the winner of the five star Mandarin Oriental hotel break in Prague is Mr Timothy Drabble from West Sussex.

Recycling for Coram

You can now support Coram and help the environment at the same time – for free! Recycle your printer cartridges and old mobile phones with Each One Counts, and for every recyclable item, Coram will receive up to £3. Visit www.eachonecounts.co.uk/coram to get started.