

DIRECTOR'S REFLECTIONS

Welcome to our 2014 annual newsletter. I would like to start by saying thank you for your support and interest in the work of GenR8; it is very much appreciated.

When GenR8 first started one of our main aims was to give children a positive image of the Christian faith, to counteract the many negative images and stereotypes around. More than 10 years on it's great to receive comments and stories of how our work has done just that! Only last week a teenager remarked, *“I just wanted to say how much GenR8 meant to me”*. Over the years we have been blown away by meeting teenagers who speak positively about our visits to their schools. Many, if not most, of these are ‘not yet’ Christians, but the door to faith is definitely open. I suspect the impact of GenR8 is much greater than we will ever know. Here is part of one teenager's story which emphasises the effect we can have:

“I was eight years old when GenR8 first came to my school. My friend and I so enjoyed their assemblies that we signed up to the Xcellr8 weekend. This was lots of fun but challenged me to think about living for Jesus back at school”. From here this person volunteered for GenR8 in several ways: It's Your Move, Xcellr8 and work experience. She goes on to say, “The work of GenR8 challenged me to go deeper in my faith and then enabled me to share this with others. GenR8 has been central to my Christian discipleship”.

At GenR8's core are volunteers. Over the past year more than 70 people have volunteered for one or more GenR8 related activities, which is fantastic. We are so grateful for the time, energy and skill that people bring to different aspects of our work. However we are always on the look-out for new volunteers. In fact at the time of writing we have a particular need for more volunteers for our assembly teams. With this in mind we have included a flier and news sheet articles for circulation which we hope you will use to advertise our need within your church. As one volunteer said *“It was exciting to be part of children's journey in finding out more about our God.”*

Thank you for your on-going support.

Steve Whyatt
steve@genr8.org

GenR8 has a vision to establish strong and sustainable work amongst children, in both churches and primary schools.

We aim to do this in three important ways:

- Direct to schools
- Supporting churches working with schools
- Supporting churches working with children

GenR8 PRESENTATIONS IN 2013

Our Easter presentation was called “What a Friend”. We illustrated the story of Good Friday using a piece of paper torn into the three crosses, a spear and dice. The resurrection was retold in sketch form from the viewpoint of the disciples and Mary, who discovered the empty tomb and were then visited by Jesus. The assembly ended with a moving poem summarising the whole story of Easter: *“Not just that Jesus died, But that He's alive forever, And is always by our side”*.

In the summer term we learnt about “God's Big Family”, exploring the growth of the global church from Pentecost to the present day. We sang “Jesus never, never, never turned anyone away” because Jesus invited everyone to be part of God's family. We encouraged the children to follow Jesus' example by caring for others.



At Christmas we talked about the “Special Gift” of Jesus to the whole world. The puppets discovered that the story of the first Christmas and the greatest Christmas gift of all is found in the Bible. Our mime showed that often people are too busy or distracted to accept this gift that God offers them. However, the shepherds and the wise men gave their time to visit Jesus and worship him.

“God is doing some amazing work through you guys.”
Local Church minister.

As well as school assemblies, GenR8 has been involved in many other exciting activities in 2013:

XCELLR8 WEEKEND



“Is it a bird?... Is it a plane?... No it’s the roar of Xcellr8 2013! The “Junior Hero” themed weekend was a brilliant success, looking at the stories of Miriam, Samuel, David and the servant girl Rhoda, and teaching the children to trust in God and listen to him. The Wide Game proved an especially super hit with the young people – seeing them flying into action outdoors. Other highlights included: small groups in which we made our own superhero masks, swimming, John Hardwick and Charlie the Monkey, watching The Incredibles and even a bit of

Danger Mouse. Ultimately, Xcellr8 2013 taught us that no matter what our age or size, we can do anything if we trust in God! Bring on Xcellr8 2014! *Andy Staplehurst.*

Xcellr8 is a residential weekend for 8-11 year olds held annually in February.

PRAISE PARTY

On Saturday 8th June Ely Cathedral hosted the Praise Party – “Go Global”. Over 200 children with their families enjoyed an afternoon of fun led by singer and writer, John Hardwick. Through songs, drama, games and quizzes, the children learnt that God’s family grew and grew through the work of the Holy Spirit and by sharing God’s love. The “Shout Aloud” children’s choir led the “Go Global” song and performed “When you believe” from the Prince of Egypt.

INSPIRE PRAYER SPACES

INSPIRE prayer spaces use imaginative and hands-on activities for pupils to explore spirituality, values and emotions in fresh, creative ways. They are designed as a resource for local churches to use in their relationship with schools. Feedback from the ten primary schools we visited during 2013 was very positive, so much so that we are working towards return visits! During 2014 we are keen to work alongside more churches in the provision of INSPIRE so please get in touch or visit our website for more information. www.genr8.org/prayer-spaces

“Thank you so much for the fantastic prayer space which you created in our library on Tuesday. My class loved it and I know the other classes did too.” - Teacher



COOL CHOICES

Our *Cool Choices* initiative was launched during 2013 and by the time of writing will have visited nine primary schools. *Cool Choices* uses a variety of interactive activities to help year 5 and 6 students identify the choices they face now and in the future. The programme encourages students to think through the influences and pressures on them, with the aim that they will make positive life choices. If you would be interested in a *Cool Choices* visit to your local school please get in touch. enquiries@genr8.org

“The children felt that it made them stop and think about the choices they need to make and who can help them make the right choices.”- Teacher

OTHER ACTIVITIES

It’s Your Move Plus visited 11 schools last July to help children in their move to secondary school. A team of 10 young people enthusiastically shared their advice and gave reassurance to Year 6 pupils across the county. Three **Bite-size Train up** evenings in September and October were well attended and had great feedback. They dealt with a range of issues such as involving the whole church in children’s ministry to handling difficult behaviour. Steve Whyatt has continued as **Chaplain** at Oakington Primary School one day a week, offering pastoral care to members of the school community. This year GenR8 visited five churches with an **All-age service**; themes included friendship, choices and forgiveness.



If you would like more information about any of these activities please contact enquiries@genr8.org

HELLO AND GOODBYE

This year we are really fortunate to have gap-year student Andy Staplehurst as part of GenR8 for two days a week. Andy is busy working alongside the GenR8 director, helping to maintain the website as well as going out on tour and being part of the Xcellr8 team. Andy says *"I really enjoy working with all of the GenR8 team and am looking forward to the Easter tour"*.

One of our regular volunteer team members, Gillian Overitt has taken on a new role. Gillian is available to visit your church or group to share a little about GenR8's work and the opportunities it presents.

At the end of 2013 we said goodbye to our schools worker Vanessa Dolphin. Amongst other things Vanessa was instrumental in the setting up, launch and running of INSPIRE prayer spaces, which have proved very popular with staff and pupils alike. We thank Vanessa for her contribution to the development of GenR8.

This year we also said goodbye to a number of regular volunteer team members. These included Revd. Trevor Rowe from Willingham Baptist Church who also ran many "The Games" events linked to the Olympics in 2012. We hope Trevor enjoys his well-earned retirement! Many thanks to all of the GenR8ers who have moved on this year.

If you are interested in joining the GenR8 team please see the leaflet included with this newsletter or visit the website at www.genr8.org.

GenR8 LINKS

John Hardwick was one of the founders of GenR8 and now leads our **RE days** as well as being a creative advisor and scriptwriter. John also writes music and holiday club material and can provide children's work training. For more information visit www.johnhardwick.org.uk , www.genr8.org/re-days

Sue Greene is a Scripture Union Affiliate with over 25 years' experience of running baby and toddler groups. She is a fantastic resource and support for anyone working with under 5s. If you feel Sue could be of help to you do get in touch. www.genr8.org/working-with-under-5s

GenR8 is an associate body of **Scripture Union**, who will provide financial support until April 2014. Thanks to the generosity of Scripture Union supporters we were able to hand out 10,000 Christmas Bible comics during our recent tour. What a wonderful opportunity to get the Christmas story into the hands of so many children!

MEET THE TEAM MEMBER:

Lesley van der Walle



I was born in Paisley and moved to Bottisham with my family – husband Chris and children, Hazel and Ross – at the end of June 2012.

I had been a volunteer with Scripture Union (SU), involved in lunchtime groups in primary schools and termly "Megamix" events, as well as working in children's ministry in Hamilton Baptist Church.

We are now members of RE:NEW, a small ecumenical church which meets in Bottisham. I contacted the SU East Region Team when we moved to see how I could get involved and everyone seemed to mention GenR8, and put me in touch with Steve Whyatt. I saw the South team "in action" in December 2012 and attended GenR8 induction training in January 2013. I work part-time as a hospital pharmacist and have arranged my hours so that I can commit up to two days a week to GenR8. I went on my first tour with the Central team in Summer 2013.

I love being part of GenR8: it is a real encouragement to me. Being part of a small church, it has been great meeting with other Christians to share and support each other. We all have a common heart to present the Christian message to children and it is a privilege to be welcomed into schools. It is such a blessing to be part of GenR8 and I pray that we will be a blessing to others.

GenR8 FINANCES

Towards the end of last year GenR8 delivered its third annual report and accounts to the Charities Commission. The trustees were again encouraged by the level of income: £78k (2012: £74k) of which grants received amounted to £39k (2012: £37k). Donations from our supporter network and schools rose to £35k (2012: £33k) and the balance of the income came from resources and events. Total expenditure in 2013 was £55k (2012: £54k). As expected this was primarily staff-related costs of £42k (2012: £41k).

As reported previously the grant from Scripture Union finishes in April 2014 and we will need to be self-financing thereafter. We are grateful to SU for their support in launching GenR8 and to our regular supporters for their continued generosity.

If you are able to support the work of GenR8 either through a one-off gift or a regular donation please get in touch. Details are on our website www.genr8.org/support-us . Please don't forget to sign a Gift Aid form if you are a taxpayer!

Rob Allin, GenR8 treasurer

A VIEW FROM A TRUSTEE

I became involved with GenR8 a few years ago when Steve asked me to become a trustee. As I work as a Religious Education Adviser for the Diocese of Norwich I felt that I could bring some of my educational expertise to the team, and also be a sounding board for new ideas and initiatives. I had no idea what to expect from trustee meetings, but the best part for me is hearing about the responses of the children when teams visit schools. This is always really uplifting, and reminds us about why we dedicate time to this important work. Prior to this, my main contact with GenR8 had been through my own children who loved the presentations in their school and would sing the songs. In addition, the pastor at Willingham Baptist where we worship as a family was a GenR8 volunteer before he retired in the summer. In the last year, I've been able to support GenR8 through providing some training for volunteers on how their presentations contribute to and promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in schools (something which Ofsted inspects). It is great to be part of such an amazing team!

Kathryn Wright

Being a trustee for GenR8 is hugely rewarding. Currently we are looking for a new trustee to focus on fundraising, either with experience in this area or a willingness to learn. To find out more contact Steve Whyatt.



The GenR8 Trustees

ADMIN MATTERS

Linda King works part-time for GenR8 as the administration co-ordinator. Her role includes organising teams for assembly tours, co-ordinating meetings, taking minutes, booking schools, safeguarding and a host of other tasks! We could not function without her.

Jenny Vaughan volunteers as our finance administrator and deals with the day to day running of the accounts. She pays in donation cheques and sorts out the reimbursement of expenses as well as keeping a close eye on all financial matters.

Volunteers Kathryn Gee and Helen Tobiss have roles as personal assistants to the director. They edit many of the GenR8 documents (including this one!) and help produce the material for the assembly presentations.

KEY DIARY DATES

➤ **SPRING TERM 2014**
Xcellr8 weekend – 14th -16th Feb
Easter assembly tours - March

➤ **SUMMER TERM 2014**
Cool Choices - May
Summer assembly tours - June/July
It's Your Move Plus – July

➤ **AUTUMN TERM 2014**
Cool Choices – September
GenR8 training day – Sept/Oct
Train-Up – Sat 11th October
Christmas assembly tours – Nov/Dec

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

“I AM” CHURCH RESOURCE

This year we are working on a new initiative based around the life of Jesus. The “I Am” project will produce a hands-on resource for churches to use in their work with primary schools. The resource will use a variety of creative approaches to enable children to learn about and from the life of Jesus. Ideally it will be set up in a local church with children invited to visit, but it could also take place within a school. We hope to report on a successful launch in our next newsletter.

INSPIRE – NEW PARTNERSHIPS

From 2014 GenR8 will be working in partnership with The Church Schools of Cambridge, St Bede's School, Cambridge and Ely Diocese in the organisation and provision of INSPIRE prayer spaces.

TRAIN UP – CHILDREN'S WORKER TRAINING DAY

Saturday 11th October 2014, Milton Primary School.

We are delighted once again to offer Train Up, a training and resource day for anyone who works with children. As well as a range of workshops led by local and national experts and a host of resource stands, there will be a keynote speech from Alan Charter. Alan is an Associate Director of Scripture Union and Director of 'Children Matter!'. Do make sure that church leaders and those who work with children get this date in their diaries!