

Chairman's report – 2023-2024 for GT (UK & Eire) – Charity No. 107036

Name of Trustees – Adeline McClenaghan (Chairperson), Emma Dorman (Secretary) Des Clarke (Treasurer – non Trustee), Gail Lawther (Trustee), Jacqui MacAulay (Trustee) and Emma Crawford (Trustee), Rebecca McMillen (Trustee)

Governing document – finalised in March 2018

Summary of Purposes – to promote the love and healing grace of Jesus Christ to all within the UK and Ireland.

To relieve those in need by reason of bereavement through death, family breakdown, separation or divorce, through the provision of training and resources, to deliver grief support programmes for children and young people within UK and Ireland.

Financial year 2023 -2024

Main events and achievements

Despite the removal of Covid restrictions the Board preferred to keep our meetings on zoom as it was recognised that this was a different method and one that suited those members who were working. One positive outcome from a very difficult period for everyone.

This year saw the Board plodding through agreeing to all updates of Policies and Procedures as well as roles of volunteers where it was recognised that Mary Gault (UK rep of GT) had spent many hours editing over the months.

Raising our profile in the Community was a focus this year too, given no kids groups in the Newtownabbey area were still not running, thus freeing up those members of the Board who helped to run these groups. (more of times getting GT noticed later in the report)

It was also a desire on behalf of the Board to do more fundraising activities to achieve a public profile in the local areas. (See more later re details)

It was also important to progress the Charity by liaising with other local groups and Charities to also raise our profile.

In March 2024 Mary Gault and myself started to attend CYCSP (Children & Young People Strategic Planning) meetings where professionals in the local areas discuss up and coming concerns and events and a spin off group from this is the Hub Meetings where children and young people are referred to ourselves if they felt the families identified could benefit from our services.

Fundraising Events

In June 2023 GT won second place in an application and received £400 from Asda in Larne and Mary Gault and myself attended the presentation. There was an added bonus in that we were to inform them of any event we may hold in the future that required food or drink items and to approach them to cover the cost!

Although not a fundraiser in itself, we were invited to have a table at an event with UCB (United Christian Broadcasters) run by Volunteer Now in the Presbyterian Church in Carrickfergus. We were able to display our resources and chat to people about what we do. There was a small donation made and two people were interested in knowing more about becoming a volunteer. (20th May 2023)

Another opportunity to have a table was on 16th June 2023 in Woodlands Church in Carrickfergus. Cithra had invited us to attend which is a local Charity helping families suffering domestic violence. Some of the families we have helped and supported in the past have been victims of this type of abuse so it was a good opportunity to link in with another relevant organisation to develop our relationship with them.

Our raffle was originally planned for December 2023 but it was postponed to Easter of 2024. First prize was a 1hr Piatas session, 2nd was a “Colour Me Beautiful” session and 3rd Prize was a “Tropic” facial!

It is recognised that, by not having someone yet dedicated to applying for funding ,some opportunities have been missed as deadlines are short and need time to do the applications which generally need uploading of documents along the way. Hopefully this can soon be addressed.

Training

It is important to note that the Training of Morgan and Rebecca was actually done in 2023 and not in 2022 as was reported in my last year’s report. Apologies -this was a typo error. It was held on 26th April 2023.

Gail Lawther completed her Food Hygiene training in July of 2023.

First Aid Training was done by Gail and myself at Greenisland Baptist Church in June 2023.

A refresher course on Child Protection was completed also by Gail and myself on zoom by the same church on 20th September 2023.

On 31st January 2024 I completed Fire Warden training at aforesaid church.

Social Events

The Board recognises the importance of building its members and volunteers up, so a couple of such events were planned. The social on 15th April 2023 was mentioned in the report of last year and another social was a fundraising concert by “Slemish” in a church in Bangor on 20th October 2023. As only 3 members attended this another social was planned in December but had to be shelved as some members had forgotten! It was duly decided to avoid December in future as everyone is far too busy!

International Update

Mary Gault continues to have meetings on zoom with the Directors Dale & Jewell Erickson and their input to the updating of the Pot of Gold material (younger childrens’ grief support group resources) The licensing Agreement is still an ongoing concern but still is in process between USA and ourselves through the meetings Mary Gault has with Jewel and Dale

Grief support children's groups update

Ballyclare have been busy this past year as many children in their area have been identified so the volunteers there have been very busy! It is recognised that our own lack of kids groups have allowed our facilitators to concentrate on training and fundraising and raising our profile without tiring us out! Remember 3 of us on the Board do these support groups.

Mary Gault and Danielle Kourpass are still updating the Pot of Gold material and it is hoped then that work on updating Rays of Light will be forthcoming in the not too distant future!

Reports from the Uk rep (Mary Gault) are still being received and training opportunities are sought to further equip the Board in their skills

Social Media

Due to Rebecca's skills, our presence on Social Media has improved and it is hoped that these posts will generate more interest in the work that we do and support those who need our resources and information. Watch this space!

Conclusion

God has been good again in allowing us space to do what is necessary to give us a professional run Charity and provided opportunities to network and liaise with other organisations and Charities to raise our profile in our Community It is hoped that these will increase next year and relationships formed will grow into meaningful and fruitful ones in furthering our Charity and its aspirations and goals.

There has been discussion in perhaps contacting schools in the future in an effort to identify children in the local areas who could avail of our services and so -again – watch this space!

The Board, in setting out it's objectives and planning their activities for the year, had given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that it's activities have helped to achieve the Charity's purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries.

I, as Chair, am particularly proud of what we have achieved this year in that we are still moving forward, raising our profile and forging new relationships and may this continue!

Adeline McClenaghan

Chairperson

