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The **FORGIVENESS** project

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Dear Everyone

Welcome to our second bi-monthly newsletter.

It's been an extremely busy few months, and I'm very happy to report that The F Word exhibition continues to provoke widespread interest in its own right, and that we're making exciting progress in establishing our new programmes that build on its success.

PRISON PROGRAMME

Our prison programme focuses on researching, developing, piloting and implementing an innovative programme exploring issues around forgiveness and rehabilitation, aimed at reducing re-offending rates. In October we launched this initiative at Brixton Prison thanks to sponsorship from The Allen Lane Foundation.

Following a launch of 'The F Word' exhibition to opinion formers in the world of penal reform and installations in the four prison wings, we then held a Q&A for 40 prisoners during which exhibition participants shared their personal journeys. This was followed by a two day Healing of Memories workshop for 12 prisoners who wanted to explore the themes and issues raised by the exhibition at a more personal level. (For more information about The Healing of Memories see our website).

Feedback from prisoners and other stakeholders involved with the process has been overwhelmingly positive, with many participants showing a real shift in their self-perception, attitudes and behaviour. The use of participants from 'The F Word' exhibition, not only to inspire but also deliver the prison programme, has undoubtedly reinforced its credibility in the eyes of those from the prison who took part.

Plans are now in hand to develop and deliver a follow-on workshop, using case studies and role-play, to explore the principles and practices of Restorative Justice including prejudice awareness, conflict resolution, and mediation skills. At a more strategic level, HMP Brixton are keen to work with us, family groups and the local community to create a transformational self-help programme aimed at the social reintegration of ex-prisoners - including training up those who wish to join forces with The Forgiveness Project and personally help put its work at Brixton on a sustainable long-term footing.

The search is on for new sources of funding to help realise this vision.

EDUCATION PROGRAMME

The Forgiveness Project is looking to produce a series of interactive, multi-media teaching packs for use with different age groups in schools, focusing on Citizenship and General Studies.

The packs will seek to introduce certain concepts of responsibility within relationships. Students will be helped to develop appropriate skills in relation to these concepts and enabled to employ them within their own and other people's real life situations.

Separately, a handful of schools have mounted The F Word exhibition and set up seminars in which they've invited participants from the exhibition to come and share their stories with students

STORY COLLECTION

We have recently received a grant to extend the reach of story collecting and telling from The Body Shop Foundation. This is extremely welcome as it allows us to extend our story bank across a wider range of themes, media and geographies. Also, thanks to separate sponsorship from Anita Roddick for story collecting, I shall be going to the US in February to collect ten additional stories as a prelude to a significant tour in the States. We have partnered with POP - (The People's Opinion Project - www.thepop.org) to help make this happen.

TOURING EXHIBITION

The F Word exhibition continues to be sought by colleges, communities and conferences all over the world. On 16th December it launches at Constitution Hill in Johannesburg as part of the celebrations for National Reconciliation Day. On 27th February it launches at The Glenree Centre for Reconciliation in Ireland.

TOUR DATES IN THE UK

Surrey:

The Church of Saint Peter & Saint Paul, Godalming - January 3rd-9th 2005

Hampshire

Crofton Youth Project, Stubbington Community Centre, Fareham, (www.shorelinechristianchurch.com) 17th- 21st January 10am - 4pm, and Tues 18th 7pm - 9.30pm

London:

The Liberal Jewish Synagogue, 28 St John's Wood Rd, NW8 7HA Tel 020 7286 5181 (www.ljs.org) 23rd - 30th January 2005, 9.30am- 5.30pm

Hertfordshire:

The Mill Bridge Rooms in Hertford. Telephone 01992 582951. 21st-28th March 2005

OTHER NEWS

- During the August bank holiday weekend approximately 6000 people visited 'The F Word' exhibition at the annual Greenbelt festival at Cheltenham Race Course. As one organiser commented: "Many people came, many people cried, some people wanted to talk, some were very quiet."
- Thanks to funding from The Funding Network (www.thefundingnetwork.org.uk), in early September we held the first of two Healing of Memories workshops in the community. Considered by all participants to be an extremely effective process, it took many a step further on their journey towards healing. As one participant put it: "*I have taken away from this something invaluable which I feel I can tap into for the rest of my life.*"
- Later in September The F Word was part of the "After the Fighting Stops" conference held in Derry-Londonderry by The Old Library Trust and Towards Understanding and Healing.
- On the 12th October, to mark the 20th anniversary of the Brighton bomb, we hosted a dialogue between Jo Berry and Pat Magee at St Nicholas Church in Brighton, chaired by TFP patron Simon Fanshawe. A full transcript of this can be seen on our website.

- For the month of October 'The F Word' was held at Coventry University as part of the city's annual Peace Month celebrations. Alistair Little and Jo Berry shared their stories at the launch and took questions from an invited audience.
- We're about to get an exciting and unusual publicity opportunity thanks to Kevin McGrath of the McGrath Charitable Trust. A hoarding at QPR football ground will publicise The Forgiveness Project and each match programme will publish one of 'The F Word' stories for the remainder of the season.
- I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to Intelligent Print Solutions for printing our catalogue, Mark Engelman for producing a legal document and Hugo's restaurant in Queens Park for putting on a jazz night which raised £464. This kind of support is invaluable to us.

With best wishes

Marina Cantacuzino

www.theforgivenessproject.com

The Forgiveness Project has made remarkable progress in a very short time, with all of us working on a purely voluntary basis. However, to continue, our work, we need funding. If you would like to donate to The Forgiveness Project, please send a cheque to The Forgiveness Project, 34 Summerfield Avenue, London NW6 6JY, or email info@theforgivenessproject.com for more information.

Thanks to our funders: The Allen Lane Foundation, Anita Roddick Books, The Body Shop Foundation The Findhorn Foundation, The Forster Company, The Funding Network, Manny Cussins Foundation, McGrath Charitable Trust, Passion Pictures.