

A woman with her hands covered in multi-colored paint (blue, green, purple, yellow) is looking directly at the camera. Her hands are positioned in front of her face, with one hand above the other. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue.

'I have
realised my
potential'

Bloom & blossom

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Spring Appeal 2017

Over the last year, New Hope has provided a bed to 214 people, which is, in part, thanks to the generosity of our supporters. We know, however, that a bed is not all that is needed to escape the cycle of homelessness. Those recovering from homelessness need space and the tranquillity of nature to grow, develop and realise their value.

New Hope's Community Market Garden is unlike any of the other services. The acre of ground provides just the calm and nurturing environment needed to help people bloom in confidence and develop their skills.

Many arrive with poor mental health or suffer from the effects of alcohol and substance misuse. The peaceful environment of the garden gives everyone a chance to recover – whether that's escaping their addiction, improving their mental health or simply having the space and time to reflect. Problems that seemed insurmountable are overcome, self-belief grows and a fresh outlook on life emerges.

For those who are recovering from homelessness, staff and volunteers offer a wide variety of sessions and courses to rebuild confidence, gain life skills and provide real opportunities for future employment. This could be through learning essential bricklaying skills, for others, how to cultivate and cook fresh vegetables. Then there are creative workshops ranging from percussion jamming sessions to poetry, writing and artistic activities.

It costs **£19.85** for one person to attend a technical session such as bricklaying, or **£12.45** for one creative workshop. If you would like to support the recovery and development of those recently homeless, please consider donating a skills or creative workshop by completing and returning the enclosed form using the freepost envelope. Alternatively, visit **newhope.org.uk/store** to give online.

Come along and experience the garden in full bloom at our next Community Market Garden Open Day on Saturday 3rd June.



Gabi's story

Gabi spent several years rough sleeping following a long and abusive relationship.

'I was on the streets not knowing which way to go, or what to do.'

After being offered a bed at the Sanctuary, Gabi set herself a goal to write down her experiences. Joining the garden poetry group, she discovered a talent for writing and reciting her poems; she enjoyed art projects, including textile patchwork where every square had a special significance.

'With support from the team at the garden, I have realised my potential. They showed me what I could do — these skills will stay with me forever.'

Gabi had her story published in a volume of 'Herts Hidden Heroine' and saw her creative work displayed in galleries at Watford Museum and Artistmeet.

'My life now is amazing and complete. I have my own council flat. This would not have been possible, without New Hope's help so I will be eternally grateful and never forget any of the fantastic staff.'

Square one



We often compare the work we do to a game of Snakes and Ladders. Men and women experiencing homelessness typically struggle with all sorts of 'snakes' – these could be mental or physical health issues, addictions or a history of offending.

People who find themselves at Square One can find the support they need at our Rough Sleeping Prevention Service. Their base at the Haven has been a hub of fresh activity, engaging with over two hundred individuals in its first eight months, meeting the needs of people who are homeless or at imminent risk.

A valuable initiative to intervene before homelessness results is already underway. A bid, made in partnership with Watford Borough Council, secured £338,000 for a two year project which will

help those new to the streets, or at imminent risk of rough sleeping, get the rapid support they need. The new service, launched in April, will be known as the **Intervention Team** and will supplement the ongoing work at the Haven Support Centre.

The funding bid, submitted jointly with other local charities (Herts Young Homeless, Spectrum and Citizens Advice Bureau) will enable the **Intervention Team** to work in a fully integrated way, to provide wrap around support for those needing rapid assistance. With a member of staff from each charity and the Team Lead based at New Hope, we foresee this to be a dynamic and person-centred approach to providing the best support possible.

The scope of the new service provides an exciting way forward as New Hope constantly seeks to adapt and change to meet the needs of those who are homeless.

'This is an exciting new partnership initiative. I can't wait to see how this specialised approach can bring positive change to those in urgent need'

Nate Sarchet-Waller, Team Lead

Jesus & the storm

As I read the accounts of Jesus walking on Earth 2000 years ago, I was struck by how down to earth they are. Take the time when Jesus suggested that he and his band of followers get in boats to cross the Sea of Galilee to escape the crowds.

Jesus, tired after a busy day, did what many of us would do — he slept on a comfortable cushion at the back of the boat. Everything changed for him and the disciples when a storm developed; the journey suddenly became a life or death situation for them.

The disciples, full of fear of the storm, woke Jesus and asked him, “don’t you care that we are all about to die?” Jesus then stood and commanded the storm to be still. The storm obeyed and the disciples didn’t stop fearing, it was their fear that changed. It changed from fear of the storm to a Holy fear of God.

This account helps us deal with the storms in our lives. It challenges us to not fear the world and what it throws us, but to have a Holy fear. A Holy fear of Jesus doesn’t impose constrictive limits or leave us debilitated and cowering. A Holy fear reminds us that Jesus is sovereign over everything and will always bring good.

‘When we fear God, we fear nothing else.’ (Oswald Chambers)

Being homeless is to be facing that same storm, facing the tests that are thrown by that same world — and we may take solace in the knowledge that Jesus may calm that storm, to bring stillness into the world. For those who are homeless, New Hope provides the means to weather that storm, to provide shelter and to return good into the lives of those who need it most.

Dave Poultney
Associate Vicar and Pioneer Minister –
Bushey Parish

Home is where the heart is

'The Community Home has been amazing for me - great people and atmosphere, and a great place to start again.'

New Hope's Community Home provides short-term accommodation and a safe environment for those with substance misuse problems who are motivated to change. Since January, the Community Home has been through a period of development as, with the generosity of Aviva's Community Fund, we have been able to refurbish the bathroom facilities to open an additional bedroom and offer support to an extra resident.

Often moving from emergency accommodation, residents can stay with us for up to six months and are provided their own individual key-worker to give them the best possible support as they work towards sobriety from alcohol and drugs. From this place of security, we enable them to access educational courses, re-learn life skills and to rebuild their damaged confidence and self-esteem.

The strong family atmosphere allows residents to recover in many ways. Trev explains what it has meant to him:

'The Community Home offers me an opportunity to find both myself and my place in society again. It offers a safe, structured environment among like-minded people who understand my situation in a way that no-one else has been able to do.

The Home has given me the three most important things in my life, all of which I had lost – my sobriety, a roof and my family.'



A man with dark hair, wearing a dark jacket and a black leather backpack, is seen from the back and side. He is looking out over a city at night, with blurred lights and structures in the background. The overall color palette is dark with a teal/cyan tint.

Tom's story

**'New Hope was
the place that
helped me get
back on my feet
and sort my
head out when I
needed it'.**

Tom was attending college while living with his mother, a step brother and a lodger but after an argument about some stolen money, he left home, angry at the way he was being treated.

After sofa surfing for two nights, he found himself sleeping in a flat, exposed to an environment with people smoking crack cocaine. Street sleeping seemed like his only option but it was even harder to avoid exposure to drugs. The risks and dangers of being on the street were clear but he had nowhere else to go. Tom stopped attending his college course as he searched for somewhere to sleep.

Upon first visiting New Hope, Tom was given some warm clothes and a hot meal as well as some advice but didn't feel that he was ready to return home.

For a few nights, he stayed with a couple in an abandoned building until there was an incident where he was violently kicked and punched. Food was scarce and, at one point, Tom was even forced to deal drugs in exchange for a meal.

Tom went to visit his brother at home but still found himself unable to remain even though his mother had invited him to stay. He knew he would have to come home eventually but didn't feel ready so he set off for another night on the street.

Believing himself unable to return to his family home, Tom reached out to the team at The Haven and was offered a place to stay in New Hope's Assessment Beds. Although he was still struggling with anger issues and was afraid he wouldn't get on with the other residents, Tom stayed with New Hope until finally making contact with his Mother and moving back home.

Tom returned to the Haven and shared that, several months later, he had not since argued with his mother. He had found more stability in his life, with a steady girlfriend who is a good influence on him. Although he had not been able to complete his college course, he is soon to start a new full-time job in IT.

'I knew I had to leave.'



Reflections from the Sanctuary

Sarah is a Support Worker at the Sanctuary, New Hope's emergency accommodation.

How did you come to work at the Sanctuary?

As I had previous experience working with young offenders and I was interested in working with those facing homelessness, I applied to work for New Hope focusing on the Assessment Beds.

What is your role and what does it entail?

My role is to support our service users in the evening. This can be a difficult time for some of our residents and I am there to help them settle in and support them on their journey from homelessness to securing more permanent accommodation.

What does a typical day look like for you?

I begin at 4pm when there is a steady stream of service users coming in and out of the building. My role at this point is to ensure that everybody is doing ok and they have the space to talk if there is anything they need to get off their chest. For new residents, I will do their induction, show them around the building and introduce them to current residents. I also use this time to meet with service users to

ensure they are getting the support they require.

What do you enjoy most and why?

One thing I really enjoy is the informal conversation I have with service users in the evenings. This is often a time when they are feeling far more relaxed and open for chat. It's fascinating to hear different people's life experiences, their interests and the things that have brought them to New Hope.

Can you describe a 'stand out' moment?

I remember a time where one lady had lost her job and found herself unexpectedly homeless. She was distraught as she entered the building and spent the entire evening in floods of tears. I spent the evening consoling and reassuring her that she would be ok and wasn't in danger. When she left she was so thankful for the time she had spent here; she had made really good friends and was often heard laughing and joking. It was great to see her transformation from fear to peace as she passed through the service.

Square one hundred & one



Snakes and Ladders is a game most often characterised by its setbacks despite its many ladders of opportunity.

New Hope's mission is to create ladders of recovery in people's lives through practical support, key working, training or befriending. Our overriding ladder, however, is to enable people who have had previous experience of homelessness to find suitable accommodation.

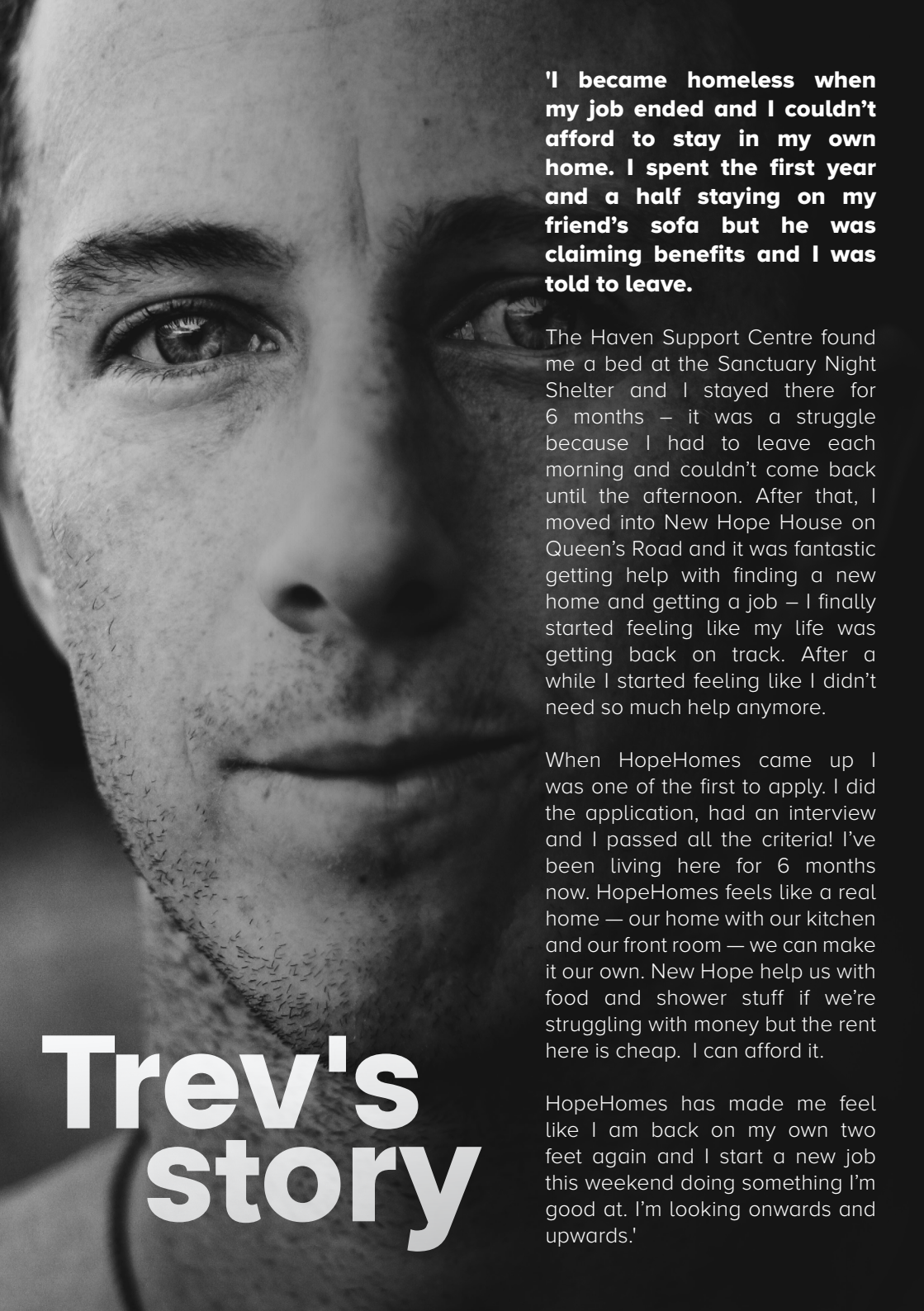
For those new to homelessness, a few nights in the Assessment Beds at the Sanctuary might suffice, but for others who are closer to square 100 on the Snakes and Ladders board, there is a need for medium or even longer term accommodation. Finding that way onto square 101 is increasingly difficult with the heart-breaking outcome that many men and women leaving our services can only find unsuitable accommodation and eventually end up back on the streets. It was within this context that the vision for **HopeHomes** was born.

HopeHomes is about providing affordable homes for people with experience of homelessness. Social housing is elusive; private rented sector landlords who accept people in receipt of benefits are rare. Our **HopeHomes** are distinct

in ensuring that the property is maintained to a good standard. We believe that by creating a pleasant environment to live in we are helping to foster a positive attitude to the property – and to life. There is support available to the residents too, including, help getting back into work and trying to ensure that residents escape homelessness for good.

Our vision for **HopeHomes** has now become a reality through the generous support of some of our supporters. The first **HopeHome** opened last year, housing four men with previous experience of homelessness. For them, the **HopeHome** is not a hostel, it's a home. We plan to open another HopeHome this autumn and two more next year.

Do get in touch with us if you'd like to be part of this exciting new initiative. In doing so you will be helping New Hope in its mission to prevent homelessness and transform lives.



'I became homeless when my job ended and I couldn't afford to stay in my own home. I spent the first year and a half staying on my friend's sofa but he was claiming benefits and I was told to leave.'

The Haven Support Centre found me a bed at the Sanctuary Night Shelter and I stayed there for 6 months – it was a struggle because I had to leave each morning and couldn't come back until the afternoon. After that, I moved into New Hope House on Queen's Road and it was fantastic getting help with finding a new home and getting a job – I finally started feeling like my life was getting back on track. After a while I started feeling like I didn't need so much help anymore.

When HopeHomes came up I was one of the first to apply. I did the application, had an interview and I passed all the criteria! I've been living here for 6 months now. HopeHomes feels like a real home – our home with our kitchen and our front room – we can make it our own. New Hope help us with food and shower stuff if we're struggling with money but the rent here is cheap. I can afford it.

HopeHomes has made me feel like I am back on my own two feet again and I start a new job this weekend doing something I'm good at. I'm looking onwards and upwards.'

Trev's story

Community Fundraising



St Luke's Bricket Wood

During the refurbishment of the Community Home, St Luke's Bricket Wood made a donation of **£250** towards furniture. On top of that, they also donated a further **£1125.00** to the charity.

Moor Park Golf Club

Moor Park Golf Club donated **£8,718.22** through their Captain's Day. A special thank you must go to Graham Drake who organised a wonderful day for all those who took part.



GAP Watford

We were very fortunate to have a number of volunteers from Gap stop by our Watford Shop. As part of their charity initiative, each store was challenged to get involved with their local community and volunteer. They were rewarded with a **£399.90** payment being made to New Hope for their hard work!



St Albans Sleepout

Back in December, we had a great night at St Albans Abbey for the 2016 sleep out! It stayed above freezing throughout the night but it was pretty nippy! All those doing the sleep out in aid of New Hope raised an amazing **£5,842.27** in sponsorship. Thank you to everyone who took part and for braving the elements!



Open days



Join us at one of our garden open days in June or September and enjoy exploring our acre of tranquility, just a stones throw away from Watford Town Centre.

For more information about our open days, visit newhope.org.uk/openday

3
JUNE

GARDEN OPEN DAY
Sat 3rd June, 10.30am - 3pm
Community Market Garden

30
SEPT

GARDEN OPEN DAY
Sat 30th Sept, 10.30am - 3pm
Community Market Garden

Connect evening

Join us for our connect evening to find out the latest New Hope news, hear from front-line staff and discover how you can help.


11
SEPT

CONNECT EVENING
Mon 11th Sept, 7.30pm
St Mary's Church, Upper Room



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