

## CONNECT CAFE

yorkshirebaptist  
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**A new venture from St Thomas'  
Church, Philadelphia in Sheffield**

"Its about connections – connecting people and much, much more!"

Thanks to a grant of £2000 from the Yorkshire Baptist Association (YBA), we were able to launch our 'Connect Cafe' on our church campus in September 2013. Twelve months on and the project has become a mainstay of our weekly activity and support to people experiencing poverty, isolation or difficult times in their lives across Sheffield.

The mission project is aimed at anyone who has recently received support from our Foodbank initiative or our CAP Centre at St Thomas' Church Philadelphia in Sheffield. It offers a weekly drop-in meeting place every Thursday from 10.30am – 12.30pm for people to connect with others over tea and toast in a relaxed and informal environment.

The project is led by Danny (one of our church evangelists), Angela and Franci with support from other regular volunteers who provide amazing help in a variety of ways.

"Its about connections – connecting people and much, much more!"

Connect Cafe has become an integral part of our weekly support to people living in the surrounding areas offering befriending, signposting and a range of opportunities for people who are often isolated to get involved in the life of our wider church community.

The cafe has helped to offer hope to every person who walks through our doors, even in the most desperate of circumstances. Our team spends time listening to people's circumstances and through these conversations builds relationships that the person feels able to share and be open. We can then direct clients to a range of organisations or activities in the local community as well as being able to pray for people where appropriate or share the gospel with people.



Danny and Angela –  
leaders of Connect Cafe



### Key progress so far:

- » We are getting 6-10 people coming along most weeks. Many are unchurched and have heard about us from the Foodbank or CAP team. Some come as a one-off for support and others have been coming more regularly.
- » We have signposted people to other local agencies and projects including mums/toddler groups and healthy eating/cooking courses.
- » CAP clients have found it especially helpful for being a place to drop-in and meet up with their befrienders as well as meeting new friends.
- » Have had lots of opportunities to pray for healing and restoration with people and see transformation happening step by step.
- » There is a real sense of belonging building up amongst people who attend who are often on the edge of society and church.

Find out more about how Home Mission is enabling Baptist churches to make Jesus known in their communities, see [www.baptist.org.uk/hmstories](http://www.baptist.org.uk/hmstories)

Make a gift to Home Mission through your Church Treasurer, or online at [www.justgiving.com/baptistuniongb](http://www.justgiving.com/baptistuniongb)

"It's like a family – people popping in for a cup of tea and chat with us. There are all age groups there from kids to grandparents. It's been a great way to talk to people about our church and Jesus!"

### **Funding:**

The Home Mission grant has enabled us to pay for the involvement of our church evangelist who is able to lead and attend the project each week and has also paid for some set-up costs for equipment in the cafe and ongoing food and drink costs.

### **Stories / Testimonies:**

One client came along one week via the foodbank and the team were able to listen and pray with her as she grieved following a recent death in her family. She went home that day and her dad noticed such a change in her that he came back with her to the cafe the following week to find out more!

A couple who were about to lose their home came along together one Thursday having been to the foodbank the previous week. They were able to have some coffee and toast and chat to some of the team and other regular attenders at the cafe. As a result, they were able to get some respite and immediate

Chapel – where cafe happens each week



support for their housing needs and came along to our 'Streetwise' Sunday service and start to feel that sense of belonging to the church family.

**Andy Niblock**  
Team Leader,

Restore & Social Transformation  
St Thomas' Church Philadelphia

"I couldn't have planned it to be as good as this! It's all because God has blessed the project and it's now really thriving. Lots of different people are coming in – some have been to our Sunday church gatherings as well and are now exploring what it is to be a Christian, which is so exciting!"

### **Please pray:**

- » Give thanks for the way in which Connect Cafe has been offering support to people experiencing poverty, isolation or difficult times in their lives
- » For Danny, Angela and Francy and their team of volunteers as they encourage a sense of belonging and offer hope to those who use the cafe
- » For all the people who help with the Foodbank and CAP centre
- » Give thanks for the encouraging testimonies already shared with the team
- » That God will continue to use Connect Cafe to bring about transformation in people's lives