

June 2009

'More Than A Rest'

All about Through the Roof's holiday at Dalesdown
By Charlotte Thacker



Through the Roof's holiday for families with children who have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), held at Dalesdown in Sussex, was once again a great success. The sun shone (although it was a little windy on the beach, to the delight of one particular windmill enthusiast!), the countryside was gorgeous, and we went swimming and ate lots of cake. It was a brilliant holiday.

But when there is an child with autism in the family, the word 'holiday' is somewhat misleading. A family holiday often means the parents leave feeling even more exhausted than when they came. Caring for an autistic child is a job with precious little annual leave. There are holidays other than TTR's for autistic children, but these are respite holidays, and although they provide valuable and well-deserved breaks, the whole process is ridden with anxiety and guilt, particularly at how the family dynamic changes when the child is no longer there.

The holiday at Dalesdown is different in that it caters for the whole family. Parents can relax knowing that their autistic child is safe and is enjoying themselves. Through the Roof provides vital Christian ministry, and practical discussion sessions on very real issues for parents, such as the advance of puberty, are also included in the programme. However, much of the important work on the holiday happens when parents can spend time with each other, and with any other children that they may have. This holiday was more than a rest.

As a guest from previous years, it was quite wonderful to not have to run after my autistic brother, to see him happy



relating to other people, and to not have to chant "I'm sorry, he's autistic" like a mantra every time he did something outside the realms of normal behaviour.

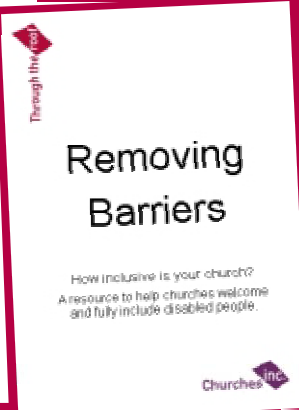
As a helper, I did have lots of fun. But beyond that I received far more than I ever could have put in. At times I was almost moved to tears at God's great love for these children, and the simple joy that they had in life. Of course, it was tiring, but at the same time very, very necessary work, and I'm so glad I could take part.

Charlotte Thacker
One-to-one helper 2009



Uganda Recce

TTR recently sent Tim and Glenda to Uganda to explore the potential of a partnership there with Christian disability charity, RILD. It seems that God has brought together a number of good contacts in and around the capital, Kampala. Glenda looked at the potential of hosting a wheelchair distribution there, while Tim explored the prospect of a UK team offering practical training to local teachers and community workers on the inclusion of disabled children in activities. Visit our website to see how they got on.



Removing Barriers

We have just launched a new resource, Removing Barriers, which will help your church assess your current situation, identify what 'reasonable adjustments' could be made, provide information to help you make these improvements and enable your church to welcome and include disabled people more fully. This resource is only **£3.00 plus p+p** and has already received a positive response at its launch at the recent Christian Resources Exhibition.

TTR's Holiday at Dalesdown 2010

Through the Roof will be returning to the Dalesdown centre for another holiday for families with children on the autistic spectrum in April 2010. We can take up to 9 families and provide a team of one-to-one helpers to look after the autistic children. This holiday offers both time together as a family (including siblings) and time out for the parents to relax, knowing that their children are in good hands. This holiday is unique and families travel from all over Britain to experience the relaxation, fun and fellowship we provide. One parent commented: *This holiday has provided me with the most stress-free time I can remember. Our one-to-one helper was superb the whole holiday felt like an extraordinary blessing from God to us.*

We are now taking bookings for next year:

When? 6th – 9th April 2010

Where? Dalesdown, nr Horsham

Cost? To be confirmed.

If you would like more information or to go on the waiting list, please contact:

Margaret Bale (Administration Manager, Through the Roof) on 01372 749955 or email: Margaret@throughtheroof.org.



TTR at work

Throughout the last few months Through the Roof has been busy training and contributing to events and conferences throughout the country. Our Operations Manager, Michael Jamison, manned a stand at the Big Church Day Out in Sussex in May, talking about all of our projects, as well as advising on accessibility for the site. DCF Co-ordinator, Jenny Edwards and CEO, Jacky Oliver also participated in the Pentecost '09 event in London, exhibiting our resources and presenting details onstage of Through the Roof's work. In May, Development Manager Tim Wood ran our new training session, 'Including Young People with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Church Life' for a group of churches in Bristol in May. Jenny and Tim also ran training at the Oxford Diocese conference. Many of our staff and volunteers manned a stand at the Christian Resources exhibition, informing attendees about TTR's work and how we can help them in their work and activities. We'll bring you more information about the continuing training and work we're doing in the next full issue of Vital Link (due out in October)

Destination: Guatemala

3 TTR volunteers will be flying to Latin America's second poorest country for the first time this summer as part of an Integr8 team with Tim. Guatemala – where 50% of the population is under 17 – will be the destination for 10 days' training in inclusive education and community activities. The team includes Philippa, a young role model who is totally blind. Philippa recently prayed to God asking for the opportunity to share her testimony with more people – and then this trip came up! Follow her journey in a future Vital Link or on the web.

Integr8 in India

A DVD of the first-ever Integr8 team in India is now available from the TTR office. It shows the team in action training 120 teachers and shows young role model, Abigail, 'inspiring and challenging' teachers as she shared her experience of having Aspergers. It is available in exchange for a small donation to help raise funds to continue the project.

'Come on, Let's Celebrate' by Jenny Edwards

The year of 2009 marks 50 years of Disabled Christians Fellowship, and has given us the opportunity to not only look back at memories but most importantly to look forward to greater things.



Jennifer Rees Larcombe will be speaking at the September 12th celebration.

On June 6th, here in Epsom, many members and friends of DCF gathered to celebrate together, some travelling from as far as Devon for the day. Bringing with them banners and photographs, and an amazing 50th Anniversary clock, people joined together in praise to the Lord for His amazing goodness over these past 50 years. We welcomed MaxSinclair (a member of TTR's Council of Reference) and wife, Sue (and a pet chicken, who featured in their talk) who shared with us about the gentle hands that hold us firmly in their grasp and give us much love and security, the hands of a loving heavenly Father. The day ended with the cutting of the cake and a rousing rendition of Thine be the Glory (led by Steve Whitehouse and VL Editor Peter Tye)!

Now we are looking forward to the Cruise and then on our return the celebration at Burton on Trent when we shall welcome Jennifer Rees Larcombe as our speaker. This is on September 12th and all are very welcome to attend the afternoon celebration service, just give the office a ring and let us know you are coming.



Northern Ireland

Care for the Family invited Through the Roof to exhibit at their conference in Northern Ireland and so Tim Wood travelled to support and encourage TTR's team of volunteers in the Province in raising awareness of the charity.

Committed volunteers, Carol, John and new recruit Mary spoke to many interested delegates about the charity's work and we hope the day will lead to an increased number of speaking engagements and new volunteers assisting the current team-members. A briefing day would be planned to support any new recruits. Conversations included John's experiences in church, an Occupational Therapist's interest in a Wheels trip and the need for practical assistance taking children's wheelchairs to the storage container.

Tim benefited from excellent Irish hospitality and a visit to the recently refurbished Orangefield church in Belfast, where they are committed to addressing the needs of disabled people as an integral part of all their activities. We will be featuring churches like Orangefield on our website to encourage other churches' journey of inclusion.

Tim learned that the team travel widely to churches to speak about the work and encourage the inclusion of disabled people. They also collect children's wheelchairs for the Wheels for the World programme and have a storage container based in Hillsborough.

If you have a spare hour or two and could get involved, please contact Northern Ireland Co-ordinator, Carol on **028 9094 7910**



Donations

We endeavour to personally thank all donations above £20, but sometimes it isn't possible to get in contact with every generous giver. Here's a list of those we haven't been able to reach -- thank you so much for all your gifts. We've been unable to thank Anonymous cash giver. Two anonymous donations of £20 through Stewardship Services; D & E Clarke; Anonymous via Charity Choice; Anonymous by CAF transfer; S Bright; Anonymous to WFTW by Caf voucher; W Harris; Gifts to WFTW in celebration of Glenda's birthday; gifts to WFTW in loving memory of Tommy Coomber.

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Through the Roof Charitable Trust Ltd is a UK Registered Company number 04201510, with offices at 2 Weston Road, Epsom, KT17 1JG. It is also a Registered Charity -- Number 1087788.

Our Vision

Through the Roof's vision is to see all disabled people be free to reach their full potential

Our Mission

Through the Roof's mission is to make the Christian message of salvation through Jesus Christ available to people affected by disability.

www.throughtheroof.org