

## Testimonies – Hear the Cry of the Poor

### Louise's story

"I have been in and out of the care system since I was very young, I fell in with some dangerous people and got hooked into prostitution as a way to make money. I got more into drugs and alcohol, committing various crimes like shoplifting and pickpocketing to help support my habit. I was in and out of crack houses, turning tricks to for drugs. I was absolutely destitute, dirty and down. I did not have any family support. I felt lost and trapped in this life style. In and out of hostels and prisons, and sometimes sleeping on the streets.



One day someone told me about a women's centre called women@thewell and how I could get help with my addiction problems, housing problems, have food, clean clothes and a non-judgemental atmosphere. I got assigned a named worker there who helped me address problems and helped me to get into accommodation. It took a long time for me to work though all my problems, there were days and weeks where I slipped back into my old habits, but my worker was patient and kind, and encouraged me to keep trying.

Now I feel like I have managed to get my act together. I have a studio flat and am starting to build bridges with my family. I want to do some courses so I can maybe get employment.

Going to women at the well helped me to see that there is a light at the end of the tunnel and nothing is impossible. They encouraged me to persevere and see it through and I am glad that they are there for women like me."

Louise – supported by women@thewell (<http://www.watw.org.uk>)

### John's story

"I thought I had no, I thought this was life. I thought this was the end. Because I was walking the streets. Since 2010 I have been evicted from two or three different places and been in trouble with the police through anti-social behaviour. I was bored. There was nothing else to do. Just get drunk out of my head.



Cornerstone has been a big help. If it wasn't for them I could have been found in a doorway, either dead or ... I don't know, I don't know. I come to Cornerstone everyday from half ten till four. Cornerstone helped me get the place I have now. And 'm a changed man It's the best thing since sliced bread. If you're on the streets and you need help, come here and you'll get sorted. And I mean that"

John – Cornerstone Client (<http://www.cornerstonecds.org.uk>)



# WORLD DAY OF THE POOR 2017

LOVE NOT IN WORD BUT IN DEED

## Food Bank Clients

### Debbie's Story

"I am for ever thankful for the foodbank. I would have been totally lost. I had to give up work due to ill health and while I was waiting for benefit to be sorted I was struggling with bills and food etc. I had to keep a roof over mine and my daughter's head. I was told about the foodbank - not only did they supply a few days' worth of food but they were very caring people, very supportive always lending an ear. In the six weeks holiday it's hard to keep kids amused when you don't always have the money, so I go to the foodbank lunches, which myself and my daughter enjoy. There's activities for them to do and you get a lunch then able to take a bag of shopping home. So would just like to say a huge thank you from the bottom of my heart."



### Anonymous

"During 2016 myself and family was having a difficult time. I was given a food bank voucher and, feeling a bit embarrassed, I went to the Borehamwood food bank to be welcomed by a great team of volunteers... welcomed me with open arms. I used the food bank on a couple other occasions. I was told about the family lunches that they provide during the school holidays to help those in need. I went along with my three children who all enjoy their time. I asked if they would like any help for there next one and I have now been helping with the last few family lunches. I help with the preparation before, I also help on the day. It's great to see the families enjoying themselves doing crafts and tucking in to a good meal. I enjoy giving back to a great cause that has helped me. Not just with food parcels - they are a great support network with lots of advice. "

Clients of food bank at St Teresa's Parish in Borehamwood

[borehamwood.foodbank.org.uk](http://borehamwood.foodbank.org.uk)