

SEPTEMBER 2022

SPARKFISH Newsletter

Inspiring young people in faith, hope and love!

Message from the Director

Dear SparkFish Supporters,

We are ever so grateful for the kindness you have shown SparkFish over the years. We wouldn't be here without assistance from local churches and individual sponsors. We are so blessed to have such faithful local Christians with a heart for ministry in schools.

We are writing to you now to ask for your help.

During the Covid-19 pandemic we were incredibly fortunate to receive an emergency grant from the Community Foundation for Surrey which allowed us to expand our services and increase our staffing to meet the needs of local students. This allowed us to continue to serve schools during the pandemic at a time of great difficulty for many young people.

Regrettably, this scale of emergency money has now disappeared from funding bodies, yet the needs of students remain higher than ever.

Young Minds released figures in 2022 that tell us, "One in six children aged five to 16 were identified as having a probable mental health problem in July 2021, a huge increase from one in nine in 2017. That's five children in every classroom." Furthermore, "83% of young people with mental health needs agreed that the coronavirus pandemic had made their mental health worse."

This is why we offer our Hope strand in local schools, offering support from skilled Christian staff through mentoring, drawing and talking therapy, lunchtime clubs, small groups and transition workshops. Schools are contributing what they can, and we are active in seeking grants. However, to maintain the vital support we are providing, we also need to ask for your help.

We firmly believe that God has called us to be His hands and feet in local schools, meeting the needs of vulnerable children and young people and helping them find hope and meaning and live life to the full.

We hear time and time again in schools that our support is desperately needed.

Young people have reported that, "SparkFish sessions have really helped me through school...", "I have gained a lot of confidence", "It has helped me to believe in myself more..." We've also had young people say that they have stopped self-harming because of the care and support we have offered. Last year we supported many young people who were bereaved and they told us how our Lost and Found course had helped them to cope with their grief and loss during school.

In order to sustain this vital work we are launching a financial appeal in September 2022 to raise £10,000. We are asking local Christians if they would prayerfully consider supporting us with this appeal by making a donation.

We understand that this is an incredibly difficult economic season for many of us so we do understand that this may not be possible. However, there are many other ways to support us during this challenging time.

- Please do keep us in your prayers as we continue to seek additional finance
- Could you organise a fundraising event at your local church; such as a quiz night, bring and buy sale, cake sale or film night?
- Could you consider raising money for SparkFish through a sponsored sporting event? We are always on the lookout for keen marathon runners or cyclists!

We are so thankful for all the ways that individuals encourage us and we always remember you in our prayers.

Please do contact me if you would like to discuss this further – harriet@sparkfish.org.uk

God bless,

Harriet Pearce & the SparkFish Trustees

Learn

It has been a busy start of term for the Learn area of our work.

We are now taking bookings for our Christmas Journey, which is a walk through the Christmas story for school year 2 which takes place at the end of November, and our Easter Experience which is a dramatic presentation of the events of Holy week for school year 5 which will be taking place in March 2023. We will soon be working with our amazing team of volunteers to plan these special events for our local schools.

I have been busy with the first assemblies of the new academic year; I lead an assembly on 'Creation' this week at Reigate Parish school and have more assemblies booked in for later this term. I am also part of our local Open the Book team leading regular assemblies at St Matthews school which is a lovely opportunity.

Our aim for 'Learn' is to run RE events for schools which bring the Bible to life. We will be leading 'Walk Through the Bible' Old Testament RE lessons in the Spring Term, and we are also looking to develop our RE provision for younger primary age children, and Key Stage 3, which is schools years 7 – 9.

We are looking forward to an exciting year ahead!

- Lindsey Hardwick,
Deputy Director & Learn Coordinator

Meet our new Administrator

Hi, I'm Jo! I am married to Richard and have a 2 year old daughter, Faith. I love films, reading and dancing (watching other people, not me!!) I am a Counsellor and Mentor working with young people, adults, and couples. As well as working as the administrator at SparkFish I also mentor young people at Merstham Park School on a Monday.

I walk alongside people, whatever their struggles, and love to see breakthrough in their circumstances! There is nothing that our God cannot do!

Hope

Having joined the SparkFish team just a few weeks ago I am very much the 'new girl' in the team and am still finding my way and settling in, but the SparkFish team have made me feel very welcome and I am greatly looking forward to working with them.

I join the team after 12 years of being the Youth Minister at Holy Trinity, Redhill and therefore I have some knowledge and already established relationship with some of the local secondary schools. I love working with young people and I am excited to continue supporting them in schools through the Hope strand at SparkFish.

Unfortunately due to a delay with DBS checks I haven't been able to get into schools and meet with students yet, but I have been in to Carrington, Merstham Park and Reigate School to meet staff and introduce myself and discuss how we can best support the students. All three of these schools are still very keen for SparkFish to come in and do mentoring and lunchtime clubs with students and there is still very much a need.

Charles has clearly built up a really great relationship and trust with each of the schools and I am looking forward to building on that. I am hoping to start going into schools in the first week of October.

- Lizzie Baker, Hope Coordinator

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"SPARKFISH
MENTORING HAS
HELPED ME BELIEVE
IN MYSELF MORE"

STUDENT FEEDBACK AFTER A
SERIES OF MENTORING SESSIONS

Think!

The start of a new academic year can lead us to reflect on new beginnings. Many children and young people will be embarking on new adventures where they'll encounter challenges and opportunities that will shape their character in the years to come.

One of the many unique aspects of this school year is the change in our monarchy. It can be helpful to think back on the past to find reassurance for the present when circumstances change. I am reminded of Queen Elizabeth II's sense of duty and service as I reflect on her reign.

When I look back on my first seven months at Sparkfish, I not only see the wonderful works provided by the vast number of volunteers, but also the joy that these efforts have made possible. "It made all my worries disappear and made me feel better", is one of my favourite statements made by a young person after visiting a Think! space last academic year.

We at Sparkfish have the privilege of supporting children and young people in many aspects of their lives. We give thanks to God for the opportunities He has given us to encourage young people in faith, hope, and love. This year, we will be setting up Think! spaces in schools for the first time, providing fresh possibilities for reflection, wonder, and prayer during the busy school calendar. It is also a pleasure to revisit schools where Think! Spaces have already had such positive effects.

I give thanks to God for the increasing options we have to introduce children and young people to the rich Christian traditions of reflection and prayer. I hope that these experiences may encourage them as they make their own fresh starts.

Please get in touch with me using the information provided below if you'd like to take part in this worthwhile and enjoyable work. I would be more than happy to discuss our work with you, and I look forward again to working with those who are already a part of the Sparkfish team.

Blessings,
Charlie
E: charlie@sparkfish.org.uk
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Horley Team Ministry

Schools in Horley are really opening up ☺ This week I started "Walk Through the Bible: OT" with 3 schools! That's Meath Green Jrn., Yattendon and Trinity Oaks. Lesson 1 is Genesis and they are all excited for Lesson 2, The Life of Moses! It is a brilliant 5week course and hopefully in January I'll be able to start them on the NT course!

As well as lessons there are Assemblies – I usually offer one per half term but some schools work differently, anyway it's a joy to share a Bible story, prayer and a song!

I often meet adults who tell me they remember a certain song or magic trick I did when they were in school. Yesterday I was in the Cinema in Crawley and one of the staff started with "I think I know you... did you do Assemblies at West Chiltington Primary School?" Yes, I did but that was 15yrs ago at least! We had a lovely chat – what a privilege it is that we can bring God into the lives of children, and follow it up with some too as adults!

With Sparkfish last Term we had an Outdoor Think! Space in Meath Green Junior, now we have an indoor one planned for Trinity Oaks in November ☺ I love meeting with the Team and enjoy their prayer support too – can't wait to be part of Christmas Journey again in Nov/Dec with Horley Schools coming up too!

My Pioneer Work in Horley is coming on slowly as I meet more folk and plan to start a regular meeting on the Acres soon. That sort of work overlaps with my work in the Parish – like helping at the YMCA and also we have a Friday night Youth Club that has really grown ☺ and I work in the churches, often at St Wilfrids.

That work overlaps with my role as a Lay Reader/Minister and I enjoy the opportunities that brings.

– Tim Hill, Pioneer Worker & Lay Minister, Horley

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