

THE GRAPEVINE FUNDING SUCCESS!

The CLA funding drive that has taken place over the last six months has ended in success.

At the end of July we heard the news that we would receive another 18 months of funding. This will enable us to continue to employ Victoria as National Development Worker and to continue to expand the work of the CLA.

In addition to this successful trust funding bid, we have also received a grant of £3,500 from the Social Education Trust to run a campaign that will raise awareness of the CLA amongst younger care leavers. We are currently in the final stages of producing a campaign leaflet, which we hope will be distributed in the next few months.

There is also the marathon, which Jim will be running in September.



Thanks to lots of kind donations from friends, family and members of the CLA, Jim has raised £711 so far. We will also get Gift Aid on top of this, which amounts to 28p in every £1. All the money will go towards the work of the CLA.

Thanks to everyone who has donated so far!

Many members have also made separate donations over the past few months and we would like to thank everybody for those and for all their support!

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CONTACTS

Submit copy to The Grapevine, either by post to:

Care Leavers' Association
St Thomas Centre
Ardwick Green North
Manchester
M12 6FZ

Or by email to:

Info@careleavers.com

For general enquiries contact Victoria Hull at the office, either via the above email address or by telephone:

0161 275 9500

NEWS + UPDATES

Ian Dickson, the CLA's Leaving Care Rep has resigned from the Executive Committee due to family and work commitments. Ian continues to be a member, is committed to the CLA and to improving the current care system.

Thanks to Ian for all his work over the past year!

ACCESS TO RECORDS

The Office of the Information Commissioner is currently reviewing the advice it gives out on access to records. This is important as it influences the way that Social Services and Voluntary Sector organisations treat our requests.

CLA has drafted a letter to the Information Commissioner, which was circulated to all members on 22nd September and we hope that this will. We hope that this will ensure care leavers' experiences are taken into account when drawing up the new guidelines.

NATIONAL CARE LEAVERS' WEEK

We are working with the Bryn Melyn Foundation and other groups to help organise events for NCLW. This year it will take place from 23rd-29th October. We are working with ANV to arrange an event in Manchester. We will keep you posted with more news about this over the next month.

Members

We currently have 55 members and 1447 users of the CLR site.

If you know of anyone who would like to join, please pass our details on!

NEXT CLA MEETING

**Saturday 30th
September**

12pm-4pm

The meeting will focus on how to develop the CLA over the next year. Lunch will be provided and a short AGM will be held at the end of the day.

Everyone Welcome!

WEBSITE

We are always adding to and updating the website. Recently a new section on Leaving Care was added, with separate sections on education and other issues. More will be added soon.

If you have stories about how you found it when you left care or about your experiences of education post-16, please send them in!

In the next few months we hope to add a section on historic abuse.

MEETINGS

Saturday 20th May 2006, London

On 20th May, we met at the Park Crescent Conference Centre in Regent's Park, London. The Exec and Victoria met from 9.30am to hold a fundraising and development meeting.

At 2pm, we were joined by Nina Powell, Chris Simpson, Mike Shelton, Barbara O'Grady and Esther Shifra. We all had coffee from a nearby cafe and then looked at the membership campaign leaflet draft that Victoria had prepared. We all discussed the different reasons that people might be attracted to join the CLA and what things care leavers would look for in an organisation like ours.

We then talked about the London group and the various ways in which it could be run.

L-R: Nina, Chris, Barbara, Stephen, Jim, Will, Mike, Vicky, Mary & Esther



L-R (clockwise): Esther, Stephen, Barbara, Mary, Will, Delma, Nina, Vicky and Ian.

Several members were interested in having support meetings and it was agreed that these would probably be something that a number of care leavers would be interested in and that they could be advertised through CLA if they were set up. Will widened the discussion to talk about regional meetings in general and people's reasons for attending.

Mary talked about expanding the work of the CLA to cover the issue of care leavers becoming parents.

At 4pm, the meeting officially finished. We all moved on to a nearby bar, where we all had a drink and continued chatting.

MEETINGS

Saturday 5th August, Manchester

Our most recent meeting was held in Manchester, at Central Hall, on Saturday 5th August. We had a special guest at the meeting: Leonie Hewitt from CLAN visited all the way from Australia.

The meeting started with a review of current events, including a report from Victoria. We then discussed finances, including the new grant and plans for sustained fundraising.

Jim raised the issue of consultation with the Office of the Information Commissioner on their review of their guidance on accessing files. It was agreed that Stephen and Jim would draft a response and consult with CLA members.

Leonie & Maxine enjoying a drink after the meeting.



L-R: Stephen, Jim, Leonie, Vicky & Maxine

For the second part of the meeting, after we had all had lunch, we heard from Leonie about how CLAN had started and the work that it was now involved in.

It was great to be able to share thoughts and ideas and to learn from the experiences of CLAN.

At the end of the meeting, most of us moved onto a local bar, then later that evening Leonie headed off back to London, in order to catch a flight home on time for the Victoria State apology.

The next meeting will be held on Saturday 30th September in Manchester.

Do come along!

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Over the last few months, much of our time, as an organisation, has been focused on fundraising. However, we have remained active in other areas too.

Leaving Care Conference

In July, I attended the In care/Leaving care conference, organised by the University of Southampton. It was a two-day event, with speakers who talked on various issues, such as education, health and the general current climate surrounding care. There was a lot of involvement from young people in care and the conference was chaired by a care leaver who was studying at the University. ANV were heavily involved and ran a number of workshops. It was a useful experience and I learned more about certain issues, such as asylum seeking care leavers, information about which will soon be added to the website.

Websites

Over the last few months, there have been a lot of additions to the website. Stephen has overhauled the Access to Records Section and added a great deal of information to it.

I have added a Leaving Care section, targeted at younger care leavers. It currently contains information on useful organisations and documents, as well as advice and stories about accessing education. Over the next few months I hope to add to this massively, with pages on housing, finances and emotional well-being amongst others.

If you would like to add any stories to these pages, please send them in.

I have also updated the Join/Support Us section, which now includes suggestions for how people can get involved in raising money for the CLA. For example, people can now donate via Ebay.

Visit From CLAN

As was mentioned on the meeting page, Leonie from CLAN visited at the beginning of the August. She and Jim spent half a day in the office with me and we discussed ways to learn from one another and develop links. We are now thinking of setting up a resource Library, similar to the one CLAN has, which will enable members to borrow books, DVDs and reports on care. Leonie also kindly brought some gifts from Australia, which one member will be able to win at the meeting on 30th September!

Lobbying Government

As well as writing to the Information Commissioner on guidance to accessing files, CLA has also been in correspondence of all three major parties, regarding David Cameron's proposal to repeal the Human Rights Act.

CLA believe that this could seriously impede on care leavers' rights when accessing their files.

So far, we have had a response from both David Cameron and Menzies Campbell. We are awaiting a response from Tony Blair.

ACCESS TO RECORDS

Counselling and Records Access

Is counselling a legal requirement during records access?

Local authorities cannot insist on counselling. They must supply you with a copy of your records, even if you decline to be counselled. The position of the voluntary agencies is less clear. For example, The Children's Society says it is not obliged to grant access to records unless within a 'counselling' environment. A voluntary agency's refusal to grant you access is likely to be overturned by the High Court in Judicial Review proceedings under Article 8 of the Human Rights Act.

Why do some agencies insist on counselling?

Often care leavers are told that counselling is for their benefit. Most of the benefits, however, go to the agencies. Voluntary agencies use the term 'counselling' to disguise the real purpose of face-to-face contact. Let me explain. All organisations owe a 'duty of care' to the public. Voluntary agencies that 'looked after' children are no different. Duty of care is a legal concept. It imposes a legal obligation on agencies to protect third parties and yourself from harm. If an agency breaches this duty, those who were harmed may sue for damages. Being sued is the over-riding fear of voluntary agencies. An agency may also be criminally negligent if it breaches its duty of care.

So how do counselling and the duty of care fit together?

Care files may contain details of neglect, abandonment, and abuse of you. Agencies believe that discovery of these details may cause you to seek revenge on those who harmed you. In face-to-face counselling, the agency will monitor and record your reaction to these discoveries. If you express extreme distress, or an intention to extract revenge on a parent or third party, then the agency will secretly report you to the relevant Police force. By doing this, the agency can say it has taken necessary and sufficient steps to protect third parties from harm. In law, the agency will have complied with its duty of care and cannot be sued if the third parties suffer harm. Because of the secrecy provisions in the Data Protection Act, you will never know the Police have been contacted. You are likely to come under Police surveillance though.

A lesser reason for insisting on counselling is to protect you. After discovery of your origins or infancy, you may want to self-harm (suicide). If the agency believes you are a suicide risk, it may seek to have you sectioned under the Mental Health Act. Being sectioned means you will be committed to a psychiatric hospital or to compulsory treatment in the community. In law, by taking steps to prevent you self-harming, the agency will have complied with its duty of care to you.

Conclusions

If you attend counselling be aware that its purpose is surveillance, not therapy or support. Be aware that anything you say will be recorded and may be used against you. Be aware that despite expressions of concern, the social worker will not be working to your agenda. Refrain from answering any personal and private questions. Refrain from discussing your life in care, since leaving care and your current circumstances.

If you need to contact the agency after records access, do not telephone. All telephone conversations will be recorded without your knowledge. Make sure all further contact is in writing, that your letters are dated, and that you keep copies. This way, the potential for 'doctored' records of telephone conversations is eliminated.

Finally, never sign an agency's consent form for your data to be processed. Your consent is not needed for the agency to process your data for the purpose of records access. Withholding your consent limits the agency to processing data relating to its duty of care and details that prove your identity. Your privacy is likely to be massively compromised if you give the agency your consent to process your data.

Guidance produced by Stephen Morris

THANK YOU

A number of people have generously donated to the CLA over the past few months. We would like to thank you all:

Ian Dickson Angela Quayle Delia Tipping Alex Kemp
Michael Shelton Karan Essien Maxine Wrigley Clare Fearn
Elizabeth Kirby David Wood Delma Hughes
Isabel Clarke Helga Warzecha Neville Ball
Guy Maddox Delia Tipping Jim Goddard
Mary Clear Leonie Sheedy Will McMahon

MEMBERS' PAGES

This space is for you to have your say and share your experiences, so send them in...whatever they may be!

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

New member, Susan Sharples shares her thoughts on first joining the CLA.

Firstly I would like to introduce my-self in the particular CLA style. That is, I would like to declare myself as a care leaver, being in and out of care from the age of 9 and up to the age of 16. I was placed in various counties although my case was held by Bracknell Social Services in Berkshire. Oh, and my name is Susan Sharples, although this doesn't feel so important at the moment.

On a particularly warm Thursday, I arrive home from work to a rather large envelope. I hazard a few brief guesses before I eagerly open it....and there it is, my welcome letter from CLA.

I muse over the letters CLA and then I remember LAC.....the corporate parent term standing for 'Looked After Children'. I find the term LAC more of an insult than the term 'In Care'. 'Looked After Children' (or worse, the term LAC) implies that we have indeed been looked after and I seethe with self- righteous indignation at others' insensitive arrogance. The education department, in the London Borough of Hillingdon have used CLA instead of LAC, being sensitive enough to the implications

of being considered someone who 'LAC's' something. But I struggle with my feelings of being patronized and my sense of alienation. I am soothed by the logo on my welcome letter of 'CLA' . I grin with the mischievousness of a younger person and with the pride of a toddler....We have taken our namesake back and we now own it for ourselves. I grow stronger by the minute.

Back to my letter which I read and I think to myself

'OK, quite formal but a pleasantly professional letter for an organization run by care leavers.' Chaotically random shock waves churn around my gut as I realize how deeply internalised my own experiences of oppression are.

Whilst I write I am drawn to use the terms 'we' and 'our' but of course 'we' are not a homogenous group of care leavers. We all come into care under different circumstances and at different stages of our development. Of course our 'care' lives are all different too. And so I shed more tears, as my historical, childlike hope of belonging, a sense of belonging that sits on sand, gets washed away through our differences.

The first sentence in my letter includes the words....'I hope you enjoy being a part of the organization' and again I shed more tears....this time I've been bitten by the desire to know and to contribute and to connect and communicate and.....

I feel vulnerably younger than my 40 years.....

With this hope, all washed up and out to sea, having been ever so slightly transformed, and from this a newer, more mature hope arises, one for shared understanding of our experiences and common goals for CLA. This kind of hope has been mostly lost to me, for a past life of some 40 years and right now it tastes good.

I quickly move on to past editions of 'The Grapevine' and I read that a decision has just been reached: the patron of the organization must

also be a care leaver. This organization has balls I'm thinking. It has integrity and commitment to the empowerment of care leavers out there. I become excited as I read the profiles of the committee members. All of these generous people have been in care and substantially so. These people are not 'related' professionals, who may understand on some level the pervasive experience of being in care and who can maybe articulate in a more balanced way, compared to some of us. These people on our committee aren't like others who simply don't 'get it' and didn't 'have it'. Their words do not need to silence the rest of us, they can empower us to join in. They do 'get it' and they did 'go through it'.

I look forward to reading more from the grapevine in the future, now I need to sleep!

Write for The Grapevine!

We want the articles in The Grapevine to reflect the opinions and interests of all our members. Our aim is to have a newsletter that is written by our members, for our members!

If you would like to write a piece for us, whether it be a story about your experiences in, or leaving care, a report of a news story you have come across, a book review, poem or anything else then we would love to receive it. It can be as long or as short as you like.

Simply send your article, either by post to:

Care Leavers Association
St Thomas Centre
Ardwick Green North
Manchester
M12 6FZ

Or by email to:

grapevine@careleavers.com

A Glimmer Of Hope

In February this year, CLA member David Wood travelled to India and worked as a voluntary teacher in Bangalore. This piece is the first extract of his experiences there. The second will be published in the next issue.



So much has been written about India that it is difficult to write something that hasn't already been said. Yet, I am moved to record my experience of a country that touched my heart and my sense of humanity in a way no other country has. I am compelled to write about a country and a people, that in only four short weeks, I came to admire and respect for their resilience against adversity, crippling poverty, political corruption and mismanagement - a beautiful country with picturesque scenes that caress your dreams and devastating sights that sadden your heart – a country so full of contrasts it is breathtaking.

I had read books and seen films about India before I left home and I had read about the poverty of this third world country but until you see it close up with your own eyes you cannot imagine the effect it has on you. We westerners are so protected in our societies, particularly in the UK with its National Health Service, that even

in our worst imaginings we could not foresee poverty like this.

Mumbai (Bombay) is made up of a cluster of seven islands, some man made and all linked to the mainland by bridges. It is considered the gateway to India and has a sea port, a busy international airport and a domestic airport. There are lots of high rise housing blocks and shopping bazaars all over this sprawling, coastal metropolis. The city churns out computer software and Hindi movies faster than you can blink and is also home to Asia's largest slums. As you fly into Mumbai international airport you fly over acres of closely clustered, one room shacks and lean-to's that encroach onto three sides of the airport grounds, almost onto the airport runways. As the plane approaches it is truly a site to behold - a slum city made of cardboard, plastic, palm and banana leaves and corrugated tin roofs so closely packed together that people could hardly breathe. How people can live directly under the flight path with the aircrafts noise and pollution crashing down on top of them staggers the imagination. This then, was my first glimpse of India and I grew concerned about my trip before I had even landed. Was all of India like this and what was I letting myself in for?

The plane landed and after some initial confusion about which gate to

go through and locating passport control, it was not very well signposted, I checked-in and then managed to find a Bureau De Change and converted some American Express traveller's cheques.

You can't buy Indian currency, Rupees, in the UK. I located my suitcase and the transfer point to the domestic airport for my next flight to Bangalore. People kept coming up to me trying to help me with my case and hawkers kept trying to sell me rolled up wall maps of the world but after politely refusing and with a look of grim determination about my face and they soon left me to get on with it.

I took my first steps into the Indian sun as I waited outside for the official bus to take me to terminal 2. Having left the UK in around 5 degrees the temperature in Mumbai when I landed at midday was 28 degrees and I was soon perspiring under the sweltering heat. I don't think they know about air conditioning in Mumbai airport. This was only the start of the summer in India and in the following weeks that I was there the temperature would get much hotter.

The bus arrived with an armed escort – a policeman with a machine gun but I think he was just hitching a ride; I scrambled on board the bus for the short journey across a corner of the city. The traffic was so busy with strange looking, three wheeled auto rickshaws hooting like crazy – they sounded a bit like a gaggle of ducks with sore throats.

There were scooters, cars, motor bikes, people, dogs and cows everywhere – I've never seen traffic like it – or cows. With aircraft constantly taking off and landing all combined with the city traffic, people shouting and dogs barking, the noise was almost deafening or so it seemed and with everything so busy and manic my eyes and my mind could not take it all in. Fifteen minutes later the bus arrived at terminal two and I checked-in my suitcase and waited for my next flight Bangalore.

Two hours later I boarded the Jet Airways flight to my final destination. The 1500 mile flight to Bangalore took an hour and a half and on board I got my first taste of real Indian food. On my side of the plane the windows were in shadow so I could watch the landscape slowly change, as we flew further south, from brown, dusty desert to green rolling hills covered with trees.

My first glimpse of Bangalore was a very different to Mumbai. As we made our approach the distant sparkling blue sky changed to a brown haze that hung over the city like a tinted glass bubble. My wonderment at this pollution was soon overtaken by my excitement and apprehension of almost reaching my destination. We began our final decent. No slums' were encroaching on this airport runway. There was less high rise housing to be seen and the area looked more affluent from the air. The plane landed smoothly and eventually taxied to a stop.

ABUSE IN SOUTH AFRICA

This is the story of one care leavers' experience abuse in a South African Orphanage

Hello everyone, my name is Sharon and I live in Australia.

I was brought up in an orphanage in South Africa during the late 1940's and 1950's and witnessed and endured the most awful physical, mental and emotional abuse. I actually thought it was the norm and that we were the only ones who had such a hard time. I have since found out that it was not and that it had been happening for many years all over the world.

I had mentioned a few incidents to my two children now and again as they asked me about my childhood. I never discussed it in detail because I didn't feel the need to burden them with such horror.

About 3 years ago my adult daughter, told me she had read an article in a magazine by woman who had been in an orphanage like mine, but in a different country. She was dumb-founded and shocked. She told me: "Mum, I thought you were exaggerating before but now I really believe you because I have read that article and others like it too". She could not believe the similarities. That gave me the inspiration to do something about my story - to write it. I finally got a computer about 20 months ago, albeit an old one, to enable me to write my story. I had heard dreadful stories about the Internet and it wasn't a place I wanted to go near.

I then realised that I would need the Internet to do research etc., and reluctantly got it. To say that it drove me up the wall is an understatement. I didn't have a clue what I was doing and found it stressful and mind-boggling. I persevered and now find that it is quite a wonderful invention even though I still have a lot to learn.

My first task on the internet was to try and find people who were with me at the orphanage as I would have liked some back up for the story that I was about to write. I was also advised to leave Messages on Message Boards to try and find them and finally did that. Then I tried to find photos and any information on the Orphanage that I had been in and I could not believe what I was reading. There were just so many "kids" trying to get their stories across on the Internet and they were from many institutions but most of them were from the same institution I was in but in other countries. I read some of them and I knew that I was not alone. I never knew that it had happened all over the world. I was horrified.

I cannot name the institution I was in and I will not name names either but I thought that you in the U.K. would like to know that it also happened in South Africa. Nobody has opened up yet about the abuse in South Africa. I will be the first "kill-joy"

to do that wonderful task.

I was fairly young when I was placed there and it was the ugliest, coldest place I had ever seen. It scared me right away. They say, "a picture is worth a thousand words"; I have a lot more than a thousand words to describe the evil looking place.

We were beaten on a regular basis. We never heard any words of encouragement and we never knew what love was.

As children we used to work very hard, we scrubbed miles of corridors on our hands and knees, polished miles of wooden floors and steps too. We worked hard in the laundries and we had to look after babies and toddlers too. We were mere babes ourselves.

The one "nightmare" that haunts me to this day was the abuse of the babies and toddlers. It has prompted me to write my book. Innocent little babies sitting on their potties a couple of times a day and during the night were punched and smacked for no reason other than that they were crying. They had their heads shoved down the toilets and the toilets flushed on their little heads then more beatings because they screamed in terror. It was an ongoing, every day and night saga. When we used to bath them, the nun would come in and shove them under the water. Naturally these little babes would have nightmares and I was often up and down to them during the night trying to console them. They would wet their beds or themselves before I could get them on to their potties and the evil nun would

come out of her cell and beat the toddlers and myself. When the babies had a dirty nappy it could not be left no matter what time of night it was, I had to wash them right away and then drop them into a pail for proper washing later. It didn't matter how cold it was either, I had to do it. But the evil nun would then come into the sluice room and beat me while I was on my knees cleaning the nappies and push my face into that mess. I could never get that awful smell out of my hands no matter how hard I scrubbed them. How incredible - I was not even a teenager and yet I was forced to be a "mother" to dozens of babies.

The babes had diarrhoea more often than not. It goes without saying that they would have experienced cramps if they had such loose stools, but I was too young to know any different. They always had runny noses too and never looked happy. Sometimes the nun would check on the babies at night, up and down the rows of beds and cots and if she decided that someone needed a bashing she would give them one. My own little brother suffered her rage one night when he had his legs out of his blankets. She screamed at him to put them back under the blankets (he being 18 months old at the time) and then proceeded to bash him on the forehead with a heavy hand bell because he didn't do as he was told. He was bleeding profusely and she wrapped him in his sheets and blankets and stuck him out on the balcony in the linen cupboard.

A "big girl" found him in the morning when she went there to get fresh linen to change the baby's beds. He was

taken to hospital and nearly died. He still has the scar and an awful lump on his forehead to this day. The nun's version was that he fell out of bed and guess what, nobody bothered to query it either. We couldn't open our mouths; we were never allowed to talk about the "happenings". As my baby brother grew up the nuns would tell him it was Satan's horn coming through. How despicable.

We were always hungry. Our food was full of weevils and the porridge was a watery mess slopped into our bowls. If we didn't eat our food it was forced down our throats. If it was vomited up which it was quite often, it was scraped back into our bowls and left on our tables or our school desks for days. In between there was more "forcing" of the food and you guessed it, more of the "lovely" stuff too along with the beatings and humiliation. I was often punished by being shoved down the trapdoor in our refectory and left there for hours on end. Cold, damp and scary with lots of rats. Yes, I'm claustrophobic now, amongst other things, but I'm not scared of mice or rats. I love them.

We stole food from the nuns' kitchen when we went over to scrub their floors. It was a job I didn't mind putting my hand up for. We ate ourselves silly on that day and stuffed as much as we could down our dresses and knickers to share with friends. The nun in charge would give us each 2 grapes for our hard work.

I was scrubbing the nuns' kitchen floors a bit later than usual one evening and the nuns were having supper. I watched the way they

treated a nun who had been disobedient. They were all seated, the naughty nun was standing. She was verbally chastised by Mother Superior and then she had to go to each nun with her bowl in hand and beg, yes, beg for food. Some gave her a scrap and others gave her nothing. I could not believe what I saw.

I was caught while I was watching this drama and beaten severely and told not to open my mouth - ever. I saw many things.

I am in the process of writing my book at the moment but having a hard time trying to get any documents from the orphanage. I also have to stop writing for a while because I have nightmares. One good thing about my experiences. It taught me never to be cruel or nasty to anyone and above all I remain as unbreakable as ever. I never learnt about love or trust, I found out the hard way later in life.

Has it left me with any scars? You betcha!! One thing they never did was break my spirit. I was always strong-willed as a child and I am even stronger now.

I am appalled that abuse in every form has been going on since before my time and it is still happening all over the world today. I urge you all to stand up and speak up against any kind of abuse and that includes our beautiful animals too.

Hugs to you all from a cold wintry Australia. Oh for the hot weather, bring it on !!!

Sharon

BRAZILIA!

A member of the CLR site tells his story of life after a move to Brazil and his work with a children's football team.

You may be wondering how an ex Beechholme kid ended up living in Tombos, a sun blessed remote valley town in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil. This, perhaps, is another article.

Soon after moving with my wife, Elizete, and our son, John, to the tranquility of Tombos away from the chaos of Rio de Janeiro in early 2004, I soon found out about the local council's football sessions that had a full time paid coach - John was quick to join. However, it was not long before I realized that for many of the kids - who come from poor families in a town which reflects Brazil's appalling wealth distribution - these football sessions were their only source of organised recreation. Unfortunately, they only lasted for 1 year, because after the Town Hall changing hands at the 2004 local elections, the current ruling party decided to do away with these football sessions - where in small Brazilian towns such decisions have a strong impact, as it is the Local Council which finances practically all the town's activities. Ever since, 3 other people and myself have been running these sessions voluntarily, without any public support whatsoever.

The football sessions take place at the Local Veterans pitch. They soon became popular, training about 60 kids (mainly from poor families) divided into 2 age groups: the 7-10 year olds and the 11-14 year olds. Facilities are poor, but the enthusiasm is not lacking. I really enjoy coaching the former, which has around 35 kids in all. I often remember the thrill I had all those years ago, when I first played in a team in the Holland Park area that was made up of Brazilians and English. The pleasure is no different nowadays, even though I am working with kids from a completely different culture to the British one, which I have become accustomed to.

Brazil is very famous for its football, so it should come as no surprise to say that some of these kids show great promise in this small remote town called Tombos. Yet, the town is not so remote in the football world. A few years ago, an Arsenal scouting group, headed by Liam Brady, were here. They took one of Tombos' young promises to play with their Juniors. This, in turn, gave a young talent a bright future, which he would certainly not have had otherwise.

To understand my appeal, I have to say a little about Tombos, from a social point of view. The people, generally speaking, are very conservative in their outlook upon life and visibly resist change. The prospects for young people here are quite bleak, unless you come from a well-off family - as very few do. The town does not have any industry as such, and the local commerce is all family run. The state run schools are sub-standard, where poorly trained, underpaid teachers use outdated teaching methods. This means that a young person who shows talent in one given thing, will probably never have the opportunity to put it to use. Thus, football, along with other sports, has become one of the few slim chances that a youngster has to break the monotonous misery cycle.

I appeal to your good-nature for any support you are willing to lend for this struggle (whether it is: moral, financial, publicity or any other) to substitute this apathetic way of life for a little ray of hope.

We would be really glad to hear from you, and can contact me at: rmickailides@hotmail.com.

Robert Mickailides
Ex Rendel House, Beechholme (1962-1970)



SUPPORT OUR WORK

The CLA always needs funds to continue its work, particularly to run the websites. If you would like to donate to the CLA, you can now do so electronically, via both websites. Just go online, look for the 'donation' information and follow the instructions.

However, by far the best way to donate is via standing order as this cuts down on administration costs and allows us to budget effectively. If you would like to help us continue our work, please fill in the form below and send it back to us today.

Name: _____ **Address:** _____

Tel: _____ **Email:** _____

To the manager of _____ Bank,

Bank Address: _____

Sort code: _____ **Account Number:** _____

Please pay: Care Leavers' Association, Account No 65095940, at The Co-operative Bank Plc (08-92-99), Kings Valley, Yew Street, Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 2JU, the sum of _____ pounds.

Starting date _____ and monthly/annually thereafter. (Delete as appropriate)

Signed _____ Date: _____

Please complete this form and send it to:

**Care Leavers Association
Ardwick Green North
Manchester
M12 6FZ**



MEMBERSHIP FORM

Your Personal Details:	Telephone:
Title: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Other:.....	Email :
Forename:	Profession:
Surname:	Where did you hear about us?
Address:
..... Postcode:	Date of Birth:
<input type="checkbox"/> The CLA will keep in touch with you with newsletters & other information about our work. Please tick if you do NOT want to receive this.	

The CLA purposely keeps its membership prices low for care leavers, to ensure that all care leavers, even those on low incomes, can join us. However, in order to press for change in the current system, to provide our services and develop our projects, funding is vital. If you feel that you can afford to make a donation to help us with our work then, whatever the amount - £1 per month or £50 per month – it will be a great help!

Annual Membership (please tick the category that applies to you):
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Member (care leaver waged/unwaged): £5/£2
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Supporter: £25 (someone who supports our work but is not a care leaver)
<input type="checkbox"/> Group Supporter: £50
<input type="checkbox"/> I am a care leaver. I can't afford the membership fee, but still want to join the CLA
I wish to make an additional donation of £.....
Total payment enclosed £.....

Standing Order Membership
Donating to the CLA by standing order is a great way to give regular support. It helps us to budget more effectively and cuts down on our administrative costs. This gives us more time to devote to our projects, services and campaigns. Just a small amount per month can make a real difference.
I would like to make a monthly/quarterly/annual gift of £.....
Please provide your bank details below:
To the manager of Bank,
Bank Address
..... Sort code A/c No
Please pay the above amount to: Care Leavers' Association, A/c No 65095940, at The Co-operative bank Plc (08-92-99), Kings Valley, Yew Street, Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 2JU
Start date: Signed: Date:

Gift Aid Declaration
Please tick the box above if you would like the CLA to reclaim the tax that you have paid on your donations to us since 6th April 2000 and on any future donations.
NB: You must have paid an amount of income and/or capital gains tax (in the UK) equal to the tax that will be claimed (currently 28p for every £1 you give)

Thank you for your support.

Please return this form to: Care Leavers' Association, Ardwick Green North, Manchester, M12 6FZ.

Tel: 0161 275 9500



Our Mission and Values

The Care Leavers' Association is a not-for-profit organization, run by care leavers for care leavers. All individuals over the age of 18 with experience of being in care are entitled to full membership. We work for the benefit of all care leavers, of any age.

Our Purpose

To end the economic and social disadvantage of those who were in care by achieving significant, positive change.

Our Vision

Care leavers fully represented and participating at all levels of economic, social and public life.

Means of Achieving Our Purpose

- Provision of an arena where care leavers can work together to achieve common goals;
- Supporting care leavers who have suffered neglect or abuse;
- Helping with access to childhood case records, so that care leavers may understand their past;
- Provision of other support and information services to care leavers
- Advocating for the improvement of leaving-care provision, so that current and future care leavers may enjoy better life outcomes;
- Highlighting discrimination when it occurs, so that care leavers may enjoy the same rights and opportunities as others;
- Challenging negative stereotypes, so that care leavers do not suffer from the ignorance of others;
- Promoting, conducting and publishing research so as to raise public awareness of the needs of care leavers.

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