

THE VULNERABLE FAMILIES IN FIFE - FACULTY CHRISTMAS COLLECTION 2024

Nine years on and we are still going strong. The money we raise is really making a difference because we are now helping families in Cowdenbeath, Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy, East Fife and Levenmouth as well as Glenrothes. They are all so grateful we have stepped in and they are depending on us.

Cash is used to buy food vouchers and Christmas dinners for families. The money helps with gas and electricity, baby food, bedding, beds, warm clothes, lunches for children with additional needs, transport to hospital appointments, hygiene products and basic essentials. The money also provides an emergency fund to help families who need urgent help – a family of a single mum and three children under 5 last week lost everything in a house fire.

Times this year have been really hard due to the lack of access to mental health services to support those with chronic anxiety and post-natal depression. The money helps with activities for families all year round – picnics, play sessions and swimming lessons which families could not access otherwise due to anxiety or which they cannot afford.

The number of families fleeing domestic abuse or breaking down increases when there is poverty- the money can help set up a new safe home.

The pressure on families is, as ever, intolerable at this time of year. The move to universal credit is still a problem with a 6 week gap for benefit payments and assessments. Parents become extremely distressed that they will not be able to give their children anything for Christmas. Some parents starve themselves to be able to put aside something for their children. The alternative is debt they can never repay. The charity helps those in crisis including those driven to attempt suicide. With this collection you are not only saving Christmas but also families.

WHAT IS NEEDED?

- New toys, books, games, clothes, pyjamas, accessories or any fun presents for children of all ages (including teenagers).Also, second hand bikes etc. are great as long as they are in safe condition;
- Presents for the parents – over 50% of the families have a parent with mental health problems -the pressure of Christmas can be too much and a thought for them goes a long way;
- Christmas treats e.g. selection boxes, tins of biscuits, sweets and savoury treats which are not too perishable; and
- **CASH DONATIONS** –. The Faculty cash donation is used only for the needs of the families - there is nothing spent on charity administration. This means it gets to those who need it immediately.
- **Members can donate via their Faculty Services Ltd account (just email me with the amount and your code) or anyone can do so via a payment to Faculty Services Ltd – just email me for the bank details or send a cheque to me at Parliament House made payable to Faculty Services Ltd marked for Homestart. Please could you complete a [gift aid form](#) if you have not done so before and send it back to me – this adds a lot!**

WHERE, WHEN AND HOW?

CASH/CHEQUES/MANDATES, BANK TRANSFERS– [anytime from now!](#)

From now-14 December 2024. You can hand donations in to **Faculty Reception during this period.** Scott Brownridge can arrange for things to be collected from your home, if you let him know. scott.brownridge@Advocates.org.uk

This year we have a new idea – **you can order items on line to be delivered directly to Parliament House up until 13 December 2024.** Please address them to Scott Brownridge/ Maria Maguire K.C. Faculty Christmas Collection, Parliament Square, Parliament House, Edinburgh EH1 1RF. Please email us to expect it.

On **Saturday 14 December 2023** you can bring donations into **Parliament House** to the **Laigh Hall** in the morning **(10am- 11.30 am)** after which we will take the donations straight to Fife in a Faculty van.

Thank you to everyone who has offered support and for the truly fantastic response in the past years. It has allowed the charity to help so many more families every year. Everything you give really changes lives and gives hope. Please help, if you can.

MARIA MAGUIRE KC (maria.maguire@advocates.org.uk)