

CARJ Liverpool

Annual Report April 2019 – March 2020

Committee

During the year Angela Murphy and Veronica Shaw resigned and were replaced by Steve Atherton (Justice & Peace Co-ordinator, Liverpool Archdiocese) and Fr Charles Obanya (White Fathers, Liverpool).

At the end of this period the committee comprised:

- Stephen Atherton
- Dale Bradshaw, Project Officer
- Professor William Chambers, Chair
- Sally Croughan
- Rev Charles Obanya
- Brendan Schmack
- Professor Protasia Torkington, President
- Angela Wylie

Employees and Volunteers

Dale Bradshaw continued as Project Officer. He was assisted by Mel Birkett who managed the Circle of Voices Gospel Choir activities at St Hugh's and St Clare's Primary Schools. Louise McVey continued to provide instrumental tuition to pupils at St Vincent de Paul's School.

We were saddened by the untimely death of Ebroje Azanuwha who had volunteered at the Belvidere Centre for over 5 years. Ciara McEntee volunteered as a maths and music tutor (ukulele, guitar and piano) at Yates Court and the Belvidere Family Centre. Other volunteers were Rachel Bruce at the Belvidere Centre, and Steve Roberts (a retired police officer) at Yates Court.

Activities

All existing activities continued throughout the year. All musical and art tuition is provided by fully qualified professionals.

Music

The Circle of Voices Gospel Choir rehearsed weekly at St Hugh's and St Clare's Primary Schools and we were approached by Childwall Valley Primary School to support them. Numbers attending remained high (76) although the transient nature of many of the asylum seeker and refugee families affected attendances from Hugh's.

Performances were given, as usual, at Liverpool Anglican Cathedral, the Royal Liverpool Hospital, the local ASDA supermarket and Barclays Bank Regional Centre. To enhance the audibility of the soloists four new microphones were purchased.

A new 6 week musical activity providing ukulele, guitar, piano and singing provided by Ciara and funded by the Whitechapel Centre was successful and attended by 15 children at the Belvidere and 4 at Yates Court where the low numbers were attributed to the low occupancy of Yates Court for the duration of the course.

The piano tuition at St Vincent de Paul's School in Liverpool's China Town continued for 12 pupils. The mixed ethnicity group are from year 5 & 6 and are learning to read music and play. One of the children took Grade 1 and passed with distinction (!) Sadly the teacher continually failed to meet her reporting, provision of musical performance and extension of the instruments beyond the piano targets and after numerous warnings her contract was terminated at the end of the school year.

After School Homework Clubs

In its 8th year, the After School Homework and other activities at The Belvidere and Yates Court Centres continued with great success. Sessions are held twice weekly on Mondays and Wednesdays between 4pm and 6pm over the school year (normally!) 38 weeks per year. They are led by Dale helped by 3 volunteers, 2 of whom have helped us for 6 years.

At the Belvidere numbers vary between 12 and 18 each session. Families are transient. The number of children attending throughout November was 40 girls and 15 boys aged between 5 and 15 years although older ones attend (and help) at times. Non-English speakers ranged from 10% to 60% coming from China, Iran, Iraq, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Pakistan, Ireland, Albania Uganda, Nigeria, Eritrea and the UK.

At Yates Court Homeless Centre one session per week is held on Tuesdays and numbers attending range from 5-8 aged 5 to 12 years of age. Numbers are smaller but more remain longer. We have also employed a sessional tutor to work one to one with the lower achieving youngsters.

The Summer School run by Dale and Sue (the social worker at Belvidere) ran throughout the summer on Mondays and Tuesdays. It included art and craft, excursions and day trips.

Art Project

A one-off Art project was run starting in the spring. This was part funded by the Austin Smith Fund. Several schools and the Belvidere and Yates Court centres were invited to participate. Local professional artists Freida McKittrick, Hazel Barrett and Steve Bayley agreed to support the project inputting tuition and advice to participants and adjudication. It was agreed that the successful pieces of art would be printed for the children schools and centres.

The theme 'My Community' was agreed and children were able to use any medium. The professional artists worked with children from the schools and homes but disappointingly only 48 entries were received and St Clare's of the schools finally submitted entries. The low participation was attributed to the transient nature of the families in the homes over the term long duration of the project and the possibility of project and initiative exhaustion for the schools. However those who participated had the privilege of working with professional artist and seeing their work printed to a professional level.

Funding

Funding, as always, was a continued source of concern for the Liverpool Branch and CARJ Headquarters. This reached crisis point in 2019.

The CARJ Liverpool Project was initially funded centrally for 2-3 years. Careful management of costs, applications for funding plus ensuring financial contributions from the benefitting schools and organisations and the services of volunteers have ensured a continuation for 7-8 years. However in July CARJ funding nationally was in jeopardy and the allocation of CARJ's financial support to Liverpool was also uncertain. The London Fund was 'empty', the Liverpool Fund had £21k and the Liverpool Music Fund had £29k. Annual costs are approximately £14.7k which covers Dale's part

time salary, the costs of the Gospel Choir (although these are split 3 ways between the 2 schools and CARJ) and for the St Vincent de Paul's Classical instrumental tuition.

Financial contributions (50% of the costs of tuition) were received from the benefitting schools for the choir activities. Similarly the Family Centres (Belvidere and Yates Court) contribute on a regular basis to part-cover learning materials (£250), weekly activities and the Summer School. Barclays Bank contributed to the costs of transporting the choir to performances at Liverpool Cathedral and The Royal Liverpool Hospital (£300). Bids were also successfully made to the St Joseph's Province of the Passionists (£6k) and to the Fr Austin Smith Fund (£350) for the Art Project. A bid to LEGO for training tutors in the use of LEGO materials was also successful. Other bids to Redrow (The Steve Morgan Foundation) the Holy Spirit Fathers and the White Fathers were unsuccessful.

The highlight of the year, helped by CARJ Headquarters, which saved the Liverpool Project, was the receipt of £40k for two years. This has enabled us to continue existing projects for the next few years and also consider new initiatives with the help of additional locally generated funds and reserves. (see later).

Plans for the Future: 'Young Ambassadors for Racial Justice'

On receipt of the generous financial support of the CARJ Board and the Bishops Conference and advice from members of the CARJ Board to look more strategically at our activities, early 2020 was spent evaluating new projects. Two were looked at closely both involving encouraging and developing the leadership skills of young people. One involved inner city children working with young asylum seekers in an attempt to encourage positive thinking and integration, the other called

Brendan Schmack, a Liverpool Committee member and former CARJ Board member, school head teacher and OFSTED inspector was invited to work with Dale on this proposal. The need for racial justice in some of the mono-cultural Local Authorities of the Liverpool City Region (St Helen's, Knowsley and Birkenhead for example) was recognised. This was agreed by the Liverpool Committee with great enthusiasm just before the onset of closures associated with COVID19 and the project has been developed by a series ZOOM meetings in the 2020-21 year and adopted at our June 2020 meeting.

The project aims to challenge a group of young people to:

- *develop the leadership skills of a group of young people(Ambassadors) from Year 10 and 12 who are showing leadership potential to equip them to become effective Catholic leaders who promoters of racial justice in the Church and the wider community.*
- *deliver projects and events which promote racial justice in the Church and in wider society to various groups eg youth groups, parishes, schools, justice and peace groups, focus groups*
- *raise awareness of the work of CARJ within the Church and beyond*
- *collaborate with agencies with related objectives eg faith communities, voluntary agencies, youth councils, school parliaments.*

This will be achieved by the Ambassadors, supported by a facilitator appointed by CARJ, participating in a programme of education/awareness-raising experiences. This will lead to a legacy project which promote racial justice and combats racism.

This proposal was adopted at our June and September 2020 meetings. The Liverpool Branch has already allocated £15k from its locally generated reserves and is seeking matched funding from other organisations.

And then came the Covid19 pandemic and our first response was to endeavour to continue to provide our services whenever and wherever possible.

Professor Bill Chambers

Chair Liverpool Branch of CARJ

28th September 2020