

## HOPEWORX

We were contacted, through Gary and Jan, in September about supporting a Social Action Ministry Project that the CGC Rayleigh Church had initiated. It was decided to offer food hampers for all 78 residents of Beaver Towers and a further 28 to the Women's Refuge Aid flats in Basildon and Rayleigh.

The aim of this ministry outreach was to bring the unconditional love of God, together with The kingdom of God, to those who may not yet be within the Church family and who find themselves, for what ever reason, to be in need. This was to include practical help through supplying food and other items as the needs arose together with prayer and other ministry helps either requested or offered. There were no pre-requisites other than being in need to receive help from this ministry outreach. The meetings that were held throughout this time began with prayer focusing on this, while asking for God's heart in us, as we serve for God.

St David's Church was also involved. We found out later they had completed a canvassing initiative trying to reach the whole community. From this they realised there was one corner of Eastwood that they had no contact with at all. They all prayed about it. That area was Beaver Towers and three weeks later they got a call from Gary asking for their support!

Eastwood Baptist was so generous with not only its financial gift towards the project, but all the goods collected and for the time fellow Church members gave during the evening when all the hampers were made up. With the marvellous group of people from CGC and St David's, along with help from local businesses, especially Steven's Florists, enough goods and monies were raised to complete all the hampers and to leave us able to give a gift of these to several of our own special members.

Jo and I were involved in the honour of helping distribute the hampers to Beaver Towers and it was such a joy. Everyone was so appreciative of this gift and, for me, the highlight was seeing a young man come to his door, his face seeped in suspicion and hostility, only for his whole face to relax and give an amazing smile when he realised, not only were we not trying to sell him something, but that we were there to give him a gift, no strings attached. Jo also witnessed several ladies getting hampers and all meeting together in one flat to compare them and open them together with much laughing and joy. There was no negative feedback at all.

Last week I served a young man at work and happened to notice he lived at Beaver Tower. I asked him if he had received a hamper and he told me how overwhelmed he had been and how he had talked to Gary and couldn't wait to hear what our next project would be later in the year. He was very interested to find out who I was and how I had known about it and I was so proud to tell him I went to Eastwood Baptist Church and how we had been supporting it.

In all the hampers we included notices of all the Church services we were holding during Christmas week and all the clubs we run throughout the week with a welcome to anyone who wanted to come along. We were busy over this period and my hope is that someone at one of those services was there as a result of this initiative.

We have received a lovely card of thanks, made by one of the children resident at Basildon Women's Aid. It is now on the vestibule notice board for all to see.

This is an ongoing initiative with events planned for this year and the driving force behind this project, Barry, planning his next meeting later this month.

If anyone would like to be involved with this we would love to have you join us, so please let us know. Your continued prayers for this project would be so appreciated.

Jo and Jo