

50@50 UPDATE REPORT
FROM FREEDOM CHURCH JERSEY LTD

We were so delighted to receive £10,000 as part of the 50th celebrations of the Association of Jersey Charities. Our application focussed primarily on the community work we do with:

The Giveaway - open to the community to come along and take whatever clothing, toys and books they need. Everything is free and donated by Islanders and run by volunteers.

Little Blessings – a baby and toddler group open to the community and being used by many of the families from the Giveaway who have no/little family support in the Island and many of whom are on income support.

The Giveaway

The Giveaway continues to run on a weekly basis with between 50 and 70 families coming each Tuesday to browse the available items and take away what they need. Many bring back clothing that their children have grown out of, to then bless other families. Tea and coffee and a listening ear are also offered (free of charge). Those coming through our doors feel comfortable to be with us and often open up about the challenges they face. Some we have been able to help practically through our Love Your Neighbour fund, others we have given advice to and also pointed them in the direction of other agencies who can assist them. It's been quite overwhelming at times that complete strangers have come and felt so welcome and at home that over a hot drink they have shared what is sometimes very personal information because they feel they have no one else to talk to.

Other organisations continue to refer their clients to us and we continue to get messages from them and individuals with specific requests which we try to meet.

We were in desperate need of more hanging rails and storage shelves and have managed to use some of the money given to us to purchase some of these items. The shelving has been particularly useful in the areas where we store and sort items as it has made the area far more manageable and means we can replenish items in the giveaway far more easily.





Little Blessings

Little Blessings goes from strength to strength with many weeks oversubscribed. We would love to split the group into babies and toddlers but are unable to do so due to insufficient volunteers at the moment.

It is mostly mothers coming although we have had a couple of fathers coming along to the group and it has been so encouraging to see the children and parents' interaction developing. Many had none or very little interaction at the start of the group but with encouragement from our volunteers this has improved so much. Children who had had little interaction with other children because of lockdown are blossoming and again parents are getting advice from our team and opening up about their personal situations.

Some money from the award was used to buy Christmas gifts for the families and will be used for Mother's and Father's Day gifts this year.



The way ahead

We still have the majority of the money awarded to us left but we are excited that finally we are able to develop parts of Freedom Centre where all our activities take place which will make the whole experience for those using it far more enjoyable. This work will be taking place over the next few months and is due to be completed by October.

The area where the Giveaway is will be completely redecorated - as can be seen from the photos, the floors are bare and the whole room needs redecorating. This will help people have more of a sense of value when coming into our venue.

The foyer where Little Blessings meet will have an overhaul with better heating and flooring and an all-round more comfortable feeling for those meeting there.

The money awarded to us will help play a part in making these areas a better, more vibrant and more comfortable place where the community can come and enjoy their time with us even more.

We would like to thank again all those who were involved in the decision making for the awarding of the money, we are so grateful.

Diane Wheeler
25/02/22