



explore...

lasting relationships and marriage

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2015

RECORD YEAR FOR EXPLORE

The past academic year has been the best ever for the relationship charity, with 71 schools as well as 2 prisons visited; just over 8,000 young people benefitting from the 'The Explore Experience'. This also represents a 60% increase in the number of schools visited from 4 years ago. A number of new schools joined the list including:

La Sainte Union, Camden, St. Anne's Enfield, St. Edward's Romford, Cornwallis Academy Maidstone, Aylesford Sports College, Beaconsfield School, Holsworthy Community College, Devon, Greig School, Southampton, Portsmouth High School, Reigate Grammar School.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

There has been encouraging growth in Kent, Romford/Brentford, Hampshire and West Sussex as well as in the Catholic Diocese of Westminster. Expansion is possible in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Norfolk with the potential of new groups being set up in Somerset, Isle of Wight and North Derbyshire. One of the objectives in the current academic year is to deliver the Explore programme to deprived areas, especially parts of London. Remarkably, the Explore methodology is now being taken up in Australia!

A recent survey on Explore conducted by **Real World Relationships** had this conclusion:

"How can realistic, supportive relationships be effectively illustrated in the classroom?"

"Explore recognizes the benefits of good relationships on emotional health, and conversely sees relationship breakdown as a source of disruption and emotional stress. The charity aims to provide a counter-point to the relationships shown in the media and popular culture, which are often simply portrayed as romantic, sexual, dramatic and short-lived. These stereotypes are compounded when a young person's only experience of relationships within the home is negative, without any role models. The Explore project illustrates the values and benefits of stability and commitment within marriage.

Explore's experience of reaching well over 70,000 young people on the subject of long-term relationships has created an unparalleled insight into the lack of relationship understanding. The importance of forgiveness, adaptation and tolerance are vital for positive relationships.

Typically 8 out of 10 students speak of an Explore session in transformative terms, with singular lessons learnt that they intend to apply, of reassurance, and of a more hopeful view of the future. 9 out of 10 students rated sessions good or very good. 8 out of 10 said it had achieved all of its aims, namely to find out about the importance of lasting relationships, to learn about the importance of being married and to pick up new ideas or thoughts about what makes lasting relationships”

FUNDING & GROWTH

There are very few limits on the growth of Explore and its expansion into new geographical areas. Recruiting volunteer couples and accessing schools is a constant task but the **overwhelming need is for greater income** to enable more young people to benefit from the dialogue with married couples. To move the charity forward requires the appointment of Development Officers in areas where Explore is not currently represented. **Ultimately, we cannot continue to grow and expand without greater and sustained income. Please consider if you are able to help in this respect.**

HOW DOES MARRIAGE INFLUENCE THE SOCIETY IN WHICH WE LIVE?

- 92% of 15 year olds want to settle down and marry one day (Family Education Trust Research)
- Unmarried parents are 4/5 times more likely to break-up (Boheim & Ermich)
- By a child's 5th birthday, 8% of UK married parents have split up, compared to 52% of co-habitees and 25% of those who marry after the birth (Kiernan)

WHAT DO YOUNG PEOPLE DISCOVER FROM EXPLORE?

- Marriage is not just about sex, it is about love, trust, honesty, communication and responsibilities.
- I am more aware about how relationships develop over the years, how they don't necessarily fade, but grow.
- The difference this session made to me is that it taught me a lot of qualities you need to learn to have a successful relationship.
- Reflect more on marriage, how it works and what to expect.

“Marriage is not a contract. It is a vow. A vow is a very different thing. It's where you dedicate your life to a person and there aren't any terms. It's a gift to the other person”.

(Dr. Roger Scruton – The Family Project).

Thank you as always for your giving, prayers and commitment. **We have a vision for growth but we need your ongoing support.**

With all good wishes,

Chris Ford
Chief Executive Officer