

# GALLOWGATE DRUG PREVENTION AND FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP ANNUAL REPORT – 2003/2004

**GALLOWGATE**  
FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

[WWW.GALLOWGATEFAMILIES.COM](http://WWW.GALLOWGATEFAMILIES.COM)



## INTRODUCTION

### WELCOME TO THE GALLOWGATE FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP ANNUAL REPORT 2003-2004

It's our opportunity to inform you on what we've been doing in the last 12 months.

This year the Group celebrates an important milestone. We have operated from our current premises for 10 years. Something to celebrate indeed! Over this time we have offered - and continue to offer - a high standard of service delivered by our volunteers. Without them there would be no support group. We've had a very busy year with our various services such as the Drop-In service which operates Mon-Fri 9 to 5 pm. It recorded 1074 visits from parents and families (31 of them 'first time visits') and 69 visits from drug addicts.

We also manage a 24-hour telephone support network offering practical and intense support to parents and families often faced with extreme stress, poor health and hardship issues which are a direct result of drug misuse within the family.

Our old mini-bus was replaced with a new one as a result of a successful funding application via the Daily Record, Scotland Against Drugs and the Scottish Executive.

The bus has been in use regularly to provide transport to rehabilitation centres. There were 26 of these visits consisting of 211 parents and 38 children of addicts.

On a sad note, it was also used to take family members and other mourners to 23 funerals over the year.

A supplementary funding package from the East End Social Inclusion Partnership (located next door to our office) allows us to offer transport within our community for groups not directly associated with ourselves.

This has proved very successful in developing good relations and excellent links with other organisations.

Finally, the high profile and achievements of the Group would not have been possible without the commitment, hard work, innovation and enthusiasm of the management committee and members - good people who give their time freely and without question.

We cannot operate without such dedication to the vital work we do. A big thank you to you all!

## OUR HISTORY

**GALLOWGATE FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP** was founded in 1991 by a group of parents whose children were abusing drugs. The Group met weekly but it became apparent that the small meeting room was not adequate due to increasing membership.

With the support of Glasgow City Council, the East End Addiction Service and Greater Glasgow Health Board, the group began to operate a 'drop-in service' for parents and families experiencing drug abuse.

The ethos behind the group is to provide a **SAFE, CONFIDENTIAL, FRIENDLY** and **ACCESSIBLE** environment for parents and families where they can receive **FREE** support, services and practical help.

The benefits of therapeutic respite was recognised at an early stage in the Group's development as an important way of alleviating stress and helping people to cope.

Over the years, many of the Group's members have developed their skills through experience and training provided by the Group.

## MORE ON WHAT WE HAVE DONE LAST YEAR

### DROP-IN SERVICE:

1074 visits (31 first-time visits from parents and families)  
69 visits from drug addicts  
6 'crisis call outs'  
7 hospital visits  
17 GP visits

### MEMBERS' MEETINGS:

50 weekly meetings. Current membership stands at 66 people

### MANAGEMENT MEETING:

12 management meetings held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month

### THERAPEUTIC ART CLASS:

Twenty parents of drug addicts attend fortnightly classes which teach them the art skill of de-coupage (the coverage of surfaces with paper cut-outs). This involves intense concentration for the two hour sessions and it provides individuals with a much-needed escape from the stress and worry of living with their children's drug addiction. All the parents have said they look forward to this activity and that it has helped them to become more involved in their community. For many of them, this activity is the first social inter-action they have enjoyed for years. The standard of their art work is so good that the finished product have been sent all over the world! The funding for this activity was provided by Glasgow City Council Area Grants Committee and funds from a generous and anonymous donor. The tutor is a parent from the Group who donates his time free.

### RESPIRE:

Respite care is provided thanks to an anonymous donor who has kindly made significant donations of money. This money is earmarked for respite care only. The money has enabled us to take 43 parents, 17 children and 13 grandchildren for a week's respite break in lovely Berwick-upon-Tweed Caravan Park.

Fifteen parents were given a respite break in Blackpool and 15 more enjoyed a weekend break in Aviemore.

The feedback we received from those who went on those breaks was extremely positive. The opportunity to relax and a enjoy change of scenery were revitalising.

The Group believes firmly in respite. The opportunity to meet other families and socialise away from home is a hugely positive thing.

### SERVICE OF COMMEMORATION AND HOPE

Fifteen members attended a 'Service of Commemoration and Hope' in Dublin - the 5th annual service for the victims of drug overdose deaths.

Some of our own group have buried their own children.

The group was overwhelmed by the generous welcome from the Irish Family Support Groups.

Two of the parents from our Group - who had lost their children - were asked to take part in a procession which was led by the Garda (Police) Brass Band. The service itself was wonderful and our dead children were treated as victims of the disease of drug abuse.

Our parents were deeply moved by the service and genuinely felt that this was the first clear evidence that society cared and that the children were victims and above all valued, deeply loved and greatly missed.

One mother said: "I feel so much better just knowing other people care."

Another said: "In Glasgow, people avoid me like the plague. When they see me coming they cross the road. Here, they cuddled me and wanted to hear about my son's life and they grieved with me about his death."

What a difference this visit made to our parents on our return to Glasgow. Many are now more positive about life.

Networking achieved at this event led to two members of our Group returning to Ireland for the launch of a new Drug Service Directory.

### **BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING:**

This is a new initiative set up for parents who have lost their children to drug abuse. Parents felt that existing counselling offered through the existing GP service did not fully meet their needs. These parents now meet weekly.

### **EAST END DRUGS FORUM:**

Two members of our Group are founder members of the East End Drugs Forum and play an active part in the Forum.

Activities include: 10 management meetings team building and Action Plan Weekend 13 Executive meetings 6 'wider membership' meetings

### **COMMUNITY EVENTS:**

We are involved in our community in the following ways:

Calton Planning Group (Fun Day)  
Gallowgate Planning Group (Fun Day)  
East End Drugs Forum (AGM and Conference)

### **COMMUNITY TRANSPORT:**

Our minibus has been utilised widely over the last 12 months in the following ways:

23 funerals of drug addicts  
26 family visits (Castle Craig Rehab Centre)  
1 family visit (Jericho House Rehab Centre)  
1 New Fossil trip  
1 Rachel House trip  
4 Gallowgate Youth Group trips  
4 Bridgeton Youth Groups trips  
6 Camlachie Youth Group trips  
4 Parkhead Youth Group trips  
22 Urban Fox Youth Group trips  
3 Helenslea Nursery trips  
4 Parkhead Nursery trips

5 family visits to Kilmarnock prison  
6 family visits to Perth Prison  
3 family visits to Shotts prison  
2 'Geeza Break' trips

### **OUR WEBSITE:**

Look out for our new website coming in the summer of 2004. This is being provided free of charge under a social inclusion initiative provided by a Glasgow public relations company and a large London business. Together they are writing and designing our site and will also host it for us.

Our web address (not yet operational) is to be [www.gallowgatefamilies.com](http://www.gallowgatefamilies.com) and we will also have e mail addresses which you can use to contact us.

This is an important step forward as we embrace new technology to help even more people. And the fact that it's being provided to us free of charge means we can keep more of our budget to help the families who need us.

### **THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

We owe a special thank you to our anonymous benefactor whose money pays for our respite programme and to the organisations below without whose support we could not operate:

East End Addiction Service  
M.A.P  
D.A.T  
Belfast F.S.G  
East End Drugs Forum  
Greater Glasgow Health Board  
East End Social Inclusion Partnership  
Glasgow City Council and Area Grants Committee