

SECOND CHANCERS



Transcript - Nancy's story

"This is me going into my 41st year of teaching. I'm Nancy Cluny and I'm the Head Teacher at Dalmarnock Primary School in Glasgow. In terms of the area that we work in, 93% of my children live in what we call SIMD 1 and 2. Which is Scottish Indicators of Multiple Deprivation. The area looks good. A lot of money has been spent on making the houses look good, but there's high unemployment, a lot of social issues, the attainment gap is wide, and it's not necessarily in terms of their learning, but in the activities that our children can be exposed to and the experiences that they have, we're having to help bridge to make sure that there's equity for everybody."

"A parent came and she asked if we could run a homework club. She said she had coped with her wee one's homework up until in P1 and P2, but that her own literacy skills gave her some worries and she didn't want her wee one falling behind and that got us thinking. We ran a family homework club. It was a very simple operation. Staff would attend and help the children with their homework while parents cooked a two course meal. The idea was after that we'd all sit down and eat together. One of our local groups heard about this, PEEK, which is an organisation that does play and they suggested that they could be part of it too and we regularly were having 100 to 120 people every Tuesday night for this."

"Four years ago a parent said 'You know, I'm really going to miss this. Where I live I don't know my neighbours, they don't have kids, got nothing in common with them. I'll have six weeks of me and the kids. I suffer from depression and I'm really not looking forward to it.' So, we sat down and we thought, no, that's scandalous. So, we decided that we would open the school for the summer. Kids and parents would come. There was breakfast. We did invite people like community police, the local advisory group, the housing associations, anyone with a vested interest to come along. But we said, 'Please don't come in to preach and if the parents want to raise an issue, they will, but if they want to talk about the weather that's equally fine.' This is about building bridges."

"One of my parents was having real issues with bills. She had moved from one house to another house and it so happened that last year one of our volunteers was from CAB and he said 'That's my job.' He just took her aside and we worked it out. He told her where his office was and she was saying 'I would never have gone into that office. I wasn't sure what that was for. Now I understand.'"

"We had a parent who came and I could tell she was very distressed. It was a really, really busy day and she said did I have a minute? She lived in a situation where there had previously been domestic violence. That had stopped, but her ex-partner had moved back in and she said 'He's not doing anything. I can't tell you he's doing this. He's making noises,' she said 'and I've asked him to leave and he just makes more noises.' It was building up and she said, 'I walk into the kitchen and I look at all these things that are in the kitchen and think, I could do away with myself and that would solve the problem or I could do away with him.' We talked through what could we do. She didn't want to involve the police because she said, 'All that will happen is he'll get lifted, he'll spend tonight in the jail and tomorrow night, he's out. So, we supported her in going to the house to get furnishings. Supported her through the police to get a panic button etc. What she said at the end was, 'I could never have done all of that. This worked because I trusted all of you and because you all worked together. I would maybe have trusted the school, not social work and the police and all these other things.' But we got that mum back in her house without fracturing relationships with the father without causing too much upset to the children and it could so easily have escalated. As it is they're getting on well, by living apart, but they've just had a lovely holiday and both will say, 'D'you know that week?, We still talk about it.' - How supported they felt from people that in the past there had been a lot of distrust."

"I think if we are wanting Scotland's future, the children, the families to do better, we have to be much more involved. We have to have that trust and be the link to help support parents. There is hope. Children want better. Families want better and the aspirations are there. Everybody wants better for their bairn than they had themselves and by working together hopefully we can do that."