

crops

CHRISTIAN OPTIONS IN PETERBOROUGH SCHOOLS

crops MENTORING

10 schools

16 volunteers

termly assemblies with
3500
young people

860 sessions

90 young people

600 young people experiencing Braethe

120 sessions

lunch club & chaplaincy sessions

20 primary schools

17 secondary schools

Walk Thru Bible & RE lessons

150 attending respitals

attending respitals

IT'S YOUR MOVE

18 schools
924 children

assemblies with
2820 children

2 amazing presenters

575 children

160 young people part of The Point

young people part of The Point

GSUS LIVE

7 weeks

127 lessons

3087 pupils



TEAM UPDATES



Honour Smith CROPS Gap Year Student

I can't believe my gap year has come to an end already! My final term with CROPS has flown by. It's been very busy with 'It's Your Move' year 6 transition lessons, preparing and sending out all the Letton forms for the October Houseparty, as well as organizing various things for Soul Survivor and the CROPS Summer Bash.

A real highlight for me this term has been the Prayer Space at William Law Primary School. It's been wonderful to see the children so excited about coming every week and discovering what theme the prayer activities will be exploring. Seeing the way in which so many children have engaged with Prayer Space has also been a joy.

As I reflect on my gap year, I can see how invaluable these experiences have been through the way

God has used them in growing my confidence and ministry. Thank you to those who have supported me prayerfully and financially this past year, you have made it possible for me to do the gap year. I am also going to miss working with the lovely CROPS team everyday - I pray that you continue to bless and be blessed through the amazing work that you do. Thank you CROPS for having me, I've had a fantastic year!



Sheila Bucknell CROPS Administrator and mentor

Here we are again... Newsletter time! It is so good to be able to write a small piece to update what has been happening with my time at CROPS.

It has been a great privilege to be able to continue mentoring and it has been so good that with God's

support and love, young people have been helped to cope with the many pressures placed on their young lives. The office continues to be a place of joy and love and everyone working there is a joy to work with. It always amazes me that so few people can achieve so much but with Jesus Christ at the helm, everything is possible.

Matt directs and guides us all, whilst Chedz leads the mentoring

project and with the essential addition of a gapper, namely Honour during her final term, everything comes to fruition!

Letton Hall, The Point, It's Your Move, lunch clubs, Primary School work with Rachel and Richard, Mentoring, all happen and grow! I love my work with CROPS and with God's help may it continue for some time to come.

Love and blessings.



Richard Kean 'Walk Thru The Bible' Primary Schools Presenter

The 2018 summer term was a new experience for me! Having completed a year of training, attended an eye opening conference at Capenwray and spent time join

teaching with Rachel, I found myself taking the lead in presenting God's big picture to classes! Without the comfort of a team-teaching, verse-quoting, side-splitting presentation of the Old Testament, it was a tentative and challenging six weeks in Discovery school,

Walton. I needn't have fretted - the teachers were welcoming, the children eager to learn, and the new slides and activities were more than enough to occupy the year six students! One teacher said "[the presentation of] Zerubbabel was the cleverest thing I've ever seen!"

About crops

CROPS (Christian Options in Peterborough Schools) are a charity unique to Peterborough, and were set up by local churches in 1989 as a Christian education charity to work in schools. CROPS aims to help children and young people gain an understanding of the Christian faith, and its relevance to our lives today. In its work in schools CROPS also supports the needs of young people pastorally through a mentoring project and lunchtime clubs, developing the whole individual.

CROPS provide a wide range of resources to primary and secondary schools through assemblies, lunch-clubs, curriculum input for Religious Education, chaplaincy work, special 'off-timetable' projects, and targeted pastoral support alongside school pastoral teams. In addition to this CROPS supports local youth workers and youth work in churches through events like 'The Point' and 'Letton Houseparty' as well as running a gap year programme for school leavers. CROPS continues to be funded by churches and Christian individuals and seeks to work in partnership with local churches and other organisations.



Matt Wild's update

CROPS Director

This newsletter features what has been happening with CROPS during the long Summer Term and into the start of September!

Awake My Soul Retreat

Probably the earliest feature of 'all things summer' was our young adults retreat 'Awake My Soul' during the Easter holidays at The Stables, Letton Hall, Norfolk. We took 14 young adults away with us, many attending for the first time, for a time to be refreshed and challenged in following Jesus. We were blessed to have a team from Souster Youth and the Diocese of Peterborough to facilitate the retreat as we looked at the Beatitudes and what that means for us as follows of Jesus today. The sessions allowed us all to journey in our faith, to consider what might be getting in the way of our relationships and relationship with Jesus and space to let go of burdens. There were times of worship and community around the table, we even managed two afternoon walks nearby on the Norfolk Coast in wonderful April sunshine - so some special times of community and fun too!

CROPS Summer Celebration 'The Summer Bash'

We had a wonderful afternoon at the CROPS Annual Celebration only a few weeks ago now. We were fortunate to have one of the last lovely sunny afternoons of the summer, and welcomed a crowd of around 120 people who enjoyed the hog roast and conversations - all outdoors! As I said in a recent update, this annual event isn't just for those that are involved in CROPS' work, but anyone - those who don't know our work as well as those who do. We then all moved indoors into the main auditorium at Bretton Baptist Church, our hosts for the afternoon, for the celebration service. It was exciting to hear people's response to the updates from different members of the team about what has been happening in primary and secondary schools. We had time to briefly worship together and also break into groups to pray for the work of CROPS.

We had a lovely opportunity to hear from **Honour Smith** and **Nathanael Grenfell** as they reflected about what their time during the CROPS gap year had meant to them, how they had seen God work in the lives of children and young people and how they had grown and been stretched in the time with us. We are so grateful for all they did in this last year as key members of our day to day team during their gap year with us.

We also welcomed **Ethan Smith** as our 'gapper' for this academic year and got to know him a little. Ethan has just finished A-levels at Ken Stimpson Community School and is part of Werrington Parish Church. We managed to keep the service to an hour (!) and the prayer commissioning was a special time with many prayers and words given over CROPS, including 'What kind of house will you build?' (Isaiah 66:1) as we looked to the coming year and the opportunities before us.

I look forward to all that is to come from this busy autumn term in schools. Please be praying for all that we are up to, for God's Kingdom to grow, and for God's continued provision of energy, people, finance and openness to our work in schools.

Every blessing



IT'S YOUR MOVE

It's Your Move is Scripture Union's guide for children that are about to move up to year seven

Each child received a 64-page book packed with activities, thoughts and accounts. They're designed to be introduced near the end of year six and used over the summer to help the children prepare to start secondary school.

This year we visited 18 schools – an increase on last year – and this was my first year stepping out and trying something new, backed by the wonderful team at CROPS.

We began our time together with a fun, timed activity. It showed everyone that we can sometimes be ready ahead of time, sometimes be ready on time and sometimes need that bit longer. We wanted the children to see that it's the same for everyone when the day comes to move up to secondary school.

We then asked the children three big questions:

- What will you miss about your current school?
- What's the scariest thing about your new school?
- What are you most looking forward to at your new school?

Once we had displayed their answers on the screen, we showed the children what the most popular answers were from surveys carried out in other UK primary schools. It turns out year six children have similar



hopes and fears but occasionally there were exceptions!

The It's Your Move books were packed with engaging activities for the children: word searches, bag-packing checklists, map games and pages for collecting autographs. There were pages filled with anecdotes and advice from children that [gasp!] survived starting year seven. Teachers listed their hints and tips for starting secondary school.

We looked at different scenarios the children might encounter in the first few weeks of year seven: what we might do if a friend was being pushed by older children, or what to do if homework becomes too much. The multiple choice answers brought plenty of giggles and cheers – but the choices the children made were explored together and the CROPS team gave advice on the best courses of action.



It wouldn't be CROPS without conveying the message that God will be with the children as they begin studying at their new schools. We used the opening of Psalm 139 to show that King David knew God was always with him, and that he realised he couldn't get away from him! Though David had his ups and downs – as we all do – he was “Never Alone”.

We partnered with Newton Kibiringi (the youth minister at Werrington Parish Church) for our visits to all the Werrington schools – and what a blessing he brings! His thoughts for how children can help their friends, his prayers for their protection and his message that the Lord will be with them in their new schools, were all given with sincerity and a belief that God is at the heart his ministry. He brought his personal invitation for children to join the youth activities ahead of moving up to year seven.

By the time you read this article, those year sixes – whether ready as ever or yearning for more time – will be in year seven. They have their new uniforms, new planners and new subjects. Wherever they started secondary school the entire CROPS team wishes them the best. ■ Words by Richard Kean

Prayer Space – ‘Jam with you always’?!

I was doing a new Prayer Space at William Law School with Honour and we had made a tunnel out of chairs and a children's parachute. Some special foam tiles formed a path to crawl through the tunnel (more comfortable than the hard floor) and we had some paper at the tunnel entrance for children to write their worries on, ready to leave them in the tunnel as they crawled through. At the entrance of the tunnel was the verse ‘Leave all your worries with God because he cares for you’ 1 Peter 5v.7 and at the far end, the children came out to several little picture cards, each with a short verse or promise from the Bible on for them to choose one to take away with them.

That's why I was puzzled when I heard a girl reading ‘Jam with you always’: “I don't want that one!” she said. Knowing that I hadn't printed any verses about jam (are there any?!) I went to look at the offending card. Sure enough, the font on the picture card made the ‘l’ look very like a ‘J’ and we had to explain Jesus promise to be with us was: ‘I am with you always’ Matthew 28:20.

Words bring to mind different ideas for different people, some of you may have had a picture of a relaxed guitar jamming session when you read those words, others might be picturing strawberry jam and scones but it's our job to make sure that Jesus actual words get out there clearly, with as little misunderstanding as possible...

Acts of Collective Worship

Technology can be great but when we had a power cut just as the children were walking into the school hall which stopped the music and turned off the projector, I was very glad that I had brought a lot of ‘old fashioned’ visual aids that day.

Primary Schools Work



With Rachel Jessup

In one act of collective worship (assembly) we asked the children what they thought might be at the other end of the chain we were holding. We were introducing the thought of an anchor as a symbol of hope as we trust in God. Of course, that isn't the first thing that an imaginative primary school aged child thinks of and we had all kinds of guesses, including ‘treasure?’ or ‘a lion?’ They must have very exciting acts of collective worship usually down in Stilton if they thought I might have put a lion behind the piano in their school hall!

Walk Through the Bible: OT Mini & NT Mini

Now that Richard Kean teaches OT Mini, I haven't taught many of these Old Testament lessons recently. So when I booked in a series of lessons with the two Yr6 classes at Eye, it was a good opportunity to brush up on my hand signs. Friday afternoons in the summer heat were probably not the best time slots to agree to but we finished the term well.

I was also able to teach Yr 5&6 NT Mini at Farcet and we had a good five weeks learning about Jesus birth through to his resurrection, ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit and on into the Acts of the Apostles.

With several new schools interested in these lessons and our assemblies for the next academic year, we are on the lookout for more people who might like to train with us and share the enormous privilege of passing on the storyline of the Bible to the next generation. Please get in touch with Rachel Jessup if you are interested. ■

Words by Rachel Jessup

Secondary schools work



CROPS MENTORING

With Chris Wild



This has been our first full academic year for CROPS Mentoring and is a great opportunity to thank God and reflect on all He has done through the project. It has been fantastic to recently add Hamp-

ton College to the growing list of schools who have signed up to work with us. Hampton College are the 11th school we have partnered with and we are well on our way towards fulfilling our vision to place two mentors in every secondary school in Peterborough. We are often asked which schools our mentors go into, so here is the list in no particular order. Nene Park Academy, The King's School,

Thomas Deacon Academy, Stanground academy, Jack Hunt School, Queen Katherine Academy, Greater Peterborough University Technical College, Ormiston Bushfield Academy, City of Peterborough Academy, Ken Stimpson Community School, and Hampton College.

At the end of term it was encouraging to get feedback from many schools about the difference our mentors were making to the lives of their students. I've removed the names but these give a flavour of the schools appreciation. 'Thank you for sending them to mentor with us, the students love meeting her and we are so lucky to have your mentors in our school', 'She has been brilliant with the students and they really enjoy working with her', 'He has been invaluable to us in Year 8 and the support had made a real difference'. Two schools also contacted us to say that parents had been in touch with them to pass on messages of thanks to our mentors for the help and support that had had given.

Illuminate is Coming!

Many of you will be starting to pick up on a special project that we are partnering with Hope Revolution over – The Illuminate Tour in Secondary Schools here in Peterborough. During the summer term Matt has spent a lot of time working to get 14 secondary schools on board and booked in for this special week in November.

With our strong relationships and networks with Peterborough Schools, we have been able to play a key role in getting schools on board, many who have had previous projects that we have coordinated such as GSUS Live or CROPS RE Days in their schools. It's great to be able to be involved on the ground in this way.

The week will involve three Christian artists: LZ7, Guvna B and Faith-child working in secondary schools, spending a day in each school. The following schools have said yes to the Illuminate Tour coming in:

Nene Park Academy, Ormiston Bushfield Academy, Hampton College, Stanground Academy, The King's (the Cathedral) School, Thomas Deacon Academy, Saint John Fisher Catholic High School, City of Peterborough Academy, Ken Stimpson Community School, Arthur Mellows Village College, The Deepings School, Bourne Academy, Casterton College Rutland.

They will take lessons with half or whole year groups on the theme of 'Purpose' using their music, real life stories, Q&A, discussions and sharing their own faith stories. The aim is to help the students ex-

plore issues relevant to them such as self-worth, positive life choices, social media, bullying, self-harm and mental health

The end of this week will see two evening gigs (concerts!) on the Friday and Saturday nights in which each of the approximately 10,000 young people from these schools who experiences the lesson will be invited to attend. The artists will be performing their music and giving an opportunity to respond to the message. Local churches are coming onboard to run a six-week follow up group across all the areas. Here any young people attending the gigs who express an interest, or who take a significant step towards Christian commitment on the night, can have the opportunity to explore this if they choose to do so.

Please pray that this week will have an impact on the lives of thousands of young people, especially in relation to their wellbeing and emotional health, and that they might gain a sense of a hope about their lives and futures.

Assemblies

We've had some great fun communicating in assemblies this term with a wide range of children and young people – approximately 2420 pupils this term! Different from his usual sphere - Matt (with the help of Honour) got to take a whole school assembly at William Law Primary School with around 500 children in tow! Matt led the time taking the theme of trusting God to provide. We thought about

the Christian symbol of the anchor (a very long chain used for our visual!) moving on to retell the story of 'Manna in the desert' - the people of Israel being reminded by Moses that God would provide!

At the start of term we had our week of assemblies at Nene Park academy with years 7-11. During this week we explored the theme of heroes using a clip from the Doctor Who episode Robot of Sherwood where the Doctor and Robin Hood discuss the nature of heroism. We talked about Hebrews and the heroes of faith from Israel's past and how they all did amazing things, but the common theme here was that everyone praised in the chapter is acclaimed for their faith in God. We explained that Faith in this context means trusting God and putting that trust into action. These people are seen as heroes because they did something, and made a difference in the process. We challenged to students to think about what this would mean in our everyday lives.

In June we returned to King's School to lead alternative worship – with Honour doing a fantastic job leading the session on the theme of humility. She used clips from the film Cars to illustrate, showing how the main character Lightning McQueen didn't initially show much humility in his acceptance of race victories, but later had a turnaround in his thinking. We built on this showing Jesus' example of humility and how we can live out this value. In July we spoke to the whole of the King's School senior

school in assembly on the theme of honesty using a clip from the film Captain America: The Winter Soldier. After starting with a news story about Snowball the 40kg monster cat – a story that turned out to be an internet hoax from the 1990s, we moved on to think about words quoted in the film clip: 'truth is a matter of circumstances. It's not all things to all people all of the time'. We went on to explain that although this sounds convenient, it's a tough way to live and eventually comes back to haunt you, exploring the Bible's teaching that telling the truth leads to the best life for all.

Lunchtime Clubs

We have continued to run our weekly lunchtime drop in clubs at The King's School and Ormiston Bushfield Academy. This term at King's we said goodbye to a group of year 11 students who have consistently attended the club throughout their time at senior school. We have been able to provide support, guidance, distraction from stresses and anxieties, and bring a different perspective to issues they face (plus lots of laughs over games of Uno and Perudo along the way). A number of these students have found their way to The Point over this time and are still part of that community. Pray for us as we start new journeys with young people we are welcoming for the first time. ■

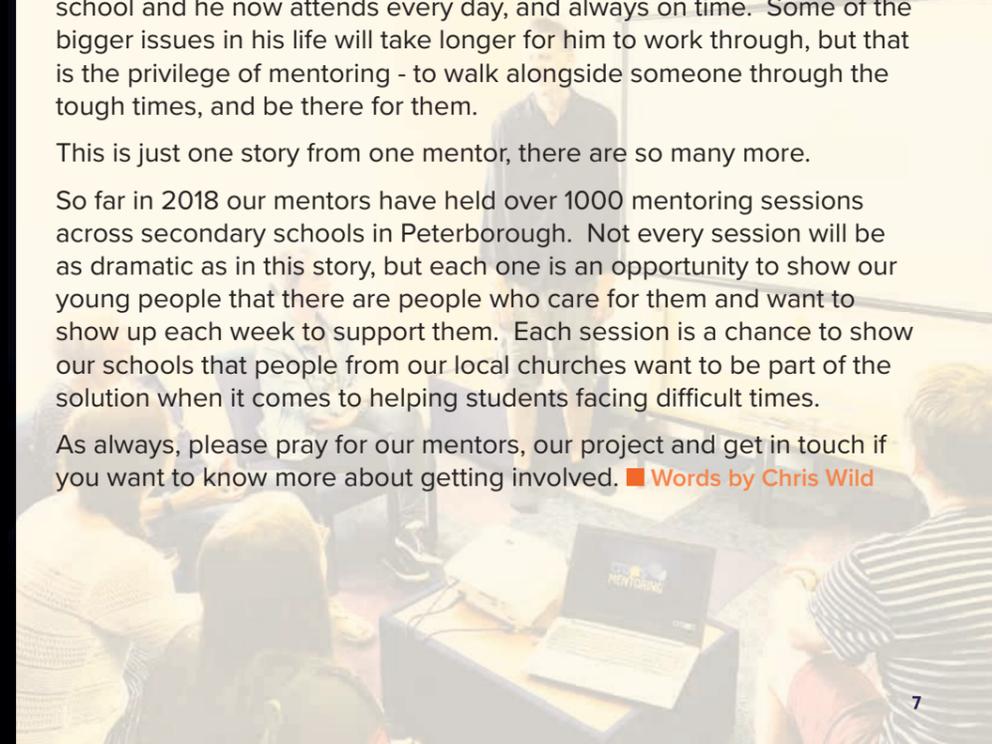
Thank you for sending them to mentor with us, the students love meeting her and we are so lucky to have your mentors in our school and the support had made a real difference

Students often get referred to see our mentors at chaotic and uncertain times of their lives. One student we are mentoring this term had moved schools and was finding it difficult to settle in. This was shown by their infrequent attendance at school, turning up late and then struggling to form friendships when present. Getting to know the student unearthed that he had suffered the bereavement of a sibling, his dad regularly failed to turn up for scheduled visits without any explanation and where he stays overnight frequently changes due to his mums long term illness. When talking about why he doesn't come to school very much, he explained he just doesn't know how to 'deal with the other kids' who say unkind things to him, so he just stays away. Having a mentor for the last few months has really helped him focus on school; he loves meeting them each week and really looks forward to it. It's a place he can offload and share his world without fear of judgement. Week by week he began to learn new ways of dealing with people and his school friendships are now settled. He doesn't get into trouble with other students anymore. This has helped him feel more confident about coming to school and he now attends every day, and always on time. Some of the bigger issues in his life will take longer for him to work through, but that is the privilege of mentoring - to walk alongside someone through the tough times, and be there for them.

This is just one story from one mentor, there are so many more.

So far in 2018 our mentors have held over 1000 mentoring sessions across secondary schools in Peterborough. Not every session will be as dramatic as in this story, but each one is an opportunity to show our young people that there are people who care for them and want to show up each week to support them. Each session is a chance to show our schools that people from our local churches want to be part of the solution when it comes to helping students facing difficult times.

As always, please pray for our mentors, our project and get in touch if you want to know more about getting involved. ■ **Words by Chris Wild**



THE POINT

CITY-WIDE
YOUTH EVENT

It's been an adventure of a term at The Point!

After the April Point, in which young person Sophie Lee spoke powerfully about being rooted in God's amazing love and how this frees us from insecurities, we went on to run a mini-series for the teaching themes at The Point over May, June and July.

This was called Switch and was a series all about developing character. We were essentially inviting all who attended The Point to think about Making the Switch – thinking about what about God's character we need to put on and be clothed by, and what we need to get rid of in our lives in order to do this.

Chad Chadwick, diocesan Youth Missioner, started the series thinking about 'What is character?' opening up the series theme ending with the challenge to think about change and what areas we need to see God work in our lives.

In June we had regular Point team member **Sam 'Shiggo' Higgins** (youth-worker in training at Eye St Matthew Church) speaking on the next installment of Switch – thinking about how to develop character, and specifically how habits and rhythms help us to see God's character form in our lives.

Finally in July we had the flying scotsman - **Murray Gallagher** (former pioneer mission student at

Christchurch, Orton Goldhay) wrap up the Switch series – talking about 'Fruit' – what we can expect to see happen in our lives and how this is a great launch-pad into mission! All in all a great series for the summer season of The Point!

On the same day as the July Point it was also the wedding of CROPS young adults **Nick Shefford** and **Amy Hawkins**. Our very own Matt Wild had the privilege of leading the wedding service and taking them through their vows. Nick did his gap year with CROPS a few years ago and Amy was regularly involved as a worship leader at The Point and Letton Hall. We pray that God will bless them as they start their married lives together.

Finally, we have new Point flyers with this academic year's dates for The Point available so please get in touch if you need a bunch! The flyers are also available as a download from our website.

Soul Survivor – Peterborough Arena

We again had a CROPS presence at the Peterborough Arena this summer for both weeks B & C of Soul Survivor. Over the two weeks we had literally hundreds of conversations with young people, parents, youth leaders and other Christian charities at our stall in the 'Toolshed' the official Soul Survivor exhibition area.

A highlight this year was 'the big chair' - literally an oversize wooden chair that we invited young people to sit on and choose one of 25 questions that we've been asked in schools about Christianity. We were overwhelmed by the young people's desire to be listened to and talk about their lives. The questions were a great starting point to talk about being a Christian in school and inform them (if they were local!) about Letton Hall, The Point, the CROPS Gap Year, etc. Great conversations were had introducing our work to parents, youth leaders, as well as some significant conversations with potential schools mentors.

want to support the work of CROPS?

CROPS relies solely on the donations of churches and individuals. You can give financially to support the work of CROPS in different ways. You can donate direct from our website a one off amount or download from our website the necessary forms for setting up a standing order.

If you would like to discuss this further or would like us to email or post the forms to you please contact us via the office. telephone: **01733 352701** email: **hello@croops.org.uk**



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