

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain – Psalm 127

Happy home marks four years

FRANCES House, the children's home of Martha Trust, has now been open for four successful years.

Currently, it's home to Laura, Jenny, Georgia, Raisa and Katie – our most recent arrival and to whom we extend a warm welcome. They are cared for in cheerful and comfortable surroundings by a team of dedicated staff, led by acting home manager Angela Gray.

All five go to school during term time and enjoy activity days in or out during the holidays, according to the time of the year.

Frances House boasts a large airy lounge with lots of comfy chairs and sofas to relax in – ideal after a busy day at school – while nearby is a sensory room decorated with colourful murals, projector lights and fibre optics. Comfortable bedrooms are on the same level and



Main picture from left, the children are Katie, Georgia and Laura. Insets are, left Jenny and Raisa.

these have been equipped with specialist beds to make lifting and handling easier for staff. Jenny attends school at Saxon House in Broadstairs, Georgia and Katie go to St Nicholas School in Canterbury, Laura attends Canterbury College, and Raisa is a weekly boarder at the Valance School in Westerham.

Angela said: "An important factor in the success of Frances House has been building up and maintaining good relationships with the families of our residents.

Each one has chosen their own approach to the care we provide and they are now watching their children become young adults.

"The house itself is reflecting that change. For example, we've just bought new quilts for the girls' beds as they no longer liked the ones they had – they had simply grown out of the children's style designs and wanted something more adult."

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The children's nurses and support workers have been instrumental in helping create family surroundings at Frances House since it opened and a number of them have gone on to develop their careers in other settings including general nursing, occupational therapy and physiotherapy.

Angela said: "This is something we do encourage. For the younger people who join us, Frances House is probably their first taste of professional caring and we're glad we can set them on the road to other things if they wish."

Holidays are important to everyone and plans so far this year include Laura, her family and a carer staying in the New Forest, Georgia travelling to Disneyland with her family, Raisa joining her family for a holiday in the summer, while Jenny has a week of outings lined up including a theatre trip and some relaxing pampering sessions.

A wheely good way to raise money!

If you fancy getting out on two wheels as the promise of better weather nears, then Sunday 4 May should be an ideal time.

That's the day of the Port & Castle sponsored bike ride which is being held by SPOKES East Kent Cycle Campaign in aid of Martha's Frances House.

It's a 25 mile circular ride starting out from the Quay at Sandwich and heading south to Dover before turning around once again.

Although there are one or two gradients on the way, it's an ideal ride for novices.

The route has been worked out by the local branch of the Cyclists' Touring Club, whose members will also be on the route to help mark the national body's 125th birthday.

Sponsor forms are available from SPOKES Vice Chairman Nick Evans – he also produces this newsletter – who can be emailed on nickevans@talk21.com or by phoning 01227 275157.

Money raised from the event will help towards buying sensory garden equipment for the children.

Supporters' barbecue will celebrate new look house

DOZENS of local Martha Trust supporters will be the stars of a special event this summer to celebrate the official opening of the new look adult house.

There were just a couple of minor decorating jobs to be finished in the building as we went to press marking the end of a £250,000 refurbishment programme.

A celebration barbecue has been pencilled in for July to thank everyone in the East Kent area who has been involved raising money for Martha over the past

year or two and enable them to meet the residents and see where they live.

An exact date has yet to be fixed - we're just booking some good weather first!

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Recalling those red nose moments . . .

Centre: Jackie with support worker Helen in Martha House

Below: Georgia, from Frances House, gets into the mood with red ribbons and Comic Relief badge.



Above: Trust Director Graham models his new executive hairdo and matching nose, complete with top pocket accessory and tie.

SHINY red noses and gelled coloured hair became de rigeur for residents and staff when they marked Comic Relief Day in March. High point of the Martha celebrations was a competition to see who could eat the most jelly – strawberry and raspberry flavours of

course – using only a pair of chop sticks. Great fun and gales of laughter echoed around the place and a total of £150 was eventually raised.

Fortunately, the mopping up was completed in under three hours!

Thanks to all who keep donations and help coming

WE'RE always grateful for the donations and support local groups and businesses give to Martha Trust.

Among the many so far this year, particular thanks go to accountants Reeves & Neylan who are organising an internal photographic exhibition and have chosen Martha to be one of its beneficiaries. We're told this is currently being keenly contested not only by the firm's staff but by those in other firms of accountants and solicitors in the area.

Accountants Reeves & Neylan told us recently it had chosen Martha Trust as its favoured charity for 2003. We have also had a letter from the Dover Flower

Club in the past few weeks saying it too would be raising money for us this year. Warmest thanks to both groups for their kindness.

Meanwhile, we're delighted to say the Tesco store in Deal put forward our name to the company's community fund and Martha has now been gifted £3,500. This was presented to trust fundraiser Jackie Flynn at a gala event in London during March.

At the beginning of April, it was all hands on deck once more for a Saturday jumble sale in St George's Hall, Deal. There were bargains galore and we made a useful sum as a result – so thanks to all who lent a hand.

SINCE the last newsletter was published we have welcomed a number of new staff to Martha and Frances Houses.

To Martha House, we're glad to welcome Gill Burnham as home manager along with Shelly Bush, Victoria Stennett, Amy Scott, Audrey Worthington, Laura Dewell and Norman Stennett.

Many of you may remember Lynn Stapley as Martha's home manager. We're pleased to say that, after a short career break, she has returned as a member of the Frances House team. She is joined by Rebecca Hodgett and Lynn Noden.

• News of another new arrival too – congratulations to former Frances House carer Kerry Brunton and Matt on the birth of daughter Chloe.

HOLIDAYS for May and June have been booked for Martha House residents to the New Forest, the Calvert Trust, La Croix du Vieux Port and the Norfolk Broads. We'll hope to update you in a future issue of the newsletter.

Caught them!

ONE of our keenest supporters, Mrs Bowers has been asking us why two of our longest serving members of staff, Cathie and Fay, haven't appeared in the newsletter before. We can only think they've been too busy dodging the camera! Anyway, we're pleased to put the record straight and include this shot of them with Nouf.



Nouf, centre, with nurse Cathie Wright, left, and support worker Fay Hambrook.

BARCLAYS

Our grateful thanks to Barclays Bank for sponsoring the production of this issue of Martha News