

## **Home-Start Manchester North reaches out to families who are struggling this Christmas.**

Home-Start one of Manchester's leading family support charities held a special Christmas lunch on Monday 22nd December for all the families they have supported in 2014. Over 20 families and 90 parents and children attended the 2 course traditional Christmas lunch at St. Paul's Church, Blackley. Most of the families who attended have firsthand experience of living in poverty and would probably otherwise not been looking forward to a Christmas dinner over the festive period.

Home-Start Manchester North works with local families in times of distress. Preventing their problems from spiralling out of control, and becoming a crisis. Tailored made emotional and practical support is delivered by trained parent volunteers to families in their own homes. In situations as diverse as poverty, isolation, bereavement, domestic abuse and illness and disability.

All of the children received a book from Father Christmas. Congregation members from St. Pauls, the Home-Start staff, and a work team from Lloyds Bank helped to make the event run smoothly – a real example of community, faith and private sector coming together to meet the needs of those less fortunate.

Thanks to money raised by the Lloyds Bank team, each parent received a box of chocolates, and every family a gift bag filled with family-focused activities for the festive period, including a board game, baking set, 2015 calendar and craft activity.

Home-Start Manchester North manager, Shelley Byrne said: “The event was a huge challenge for us as we are such a small staff team, but with the help of the church members and staff from Lloyds, we can safely say we made Christmas happen for some of the most deserving families in North Manchester. It was lovely to acknowledge the parents’ need to receive gifts at this time of year and we gave each one of them a bauble with the words ‘you are an amazing parent’ on. We hope they are now hung on their trees and will be brought out of the Christmas box every year to remind them what a wonderful job they do in the face of adversity.”

Home-Start were delighted to be joined by the Lord Mayor of Manchester Susan Cooley, who ate with the families and got a chance to hear their stories.

**-ENDS-**

Press Contact- For spokespeople and case studies, please contact-

Jo McLeish, t: 07801565623, e:info@themediaroom.org

## **NOTES TO EDITOR**

Home-Start is one of the UK's leading family support charities. We recruit and train volunteers to support parents with at least one child under the age of five. Our home visiting work is unique in the UK. The charity was set up in 1973 and now supports over 32,000 families and almost 70,000 children each year. Nearly 16,000 volunteers visit families in their own homes - parents supporting other parents in a variety of situations including isolation, bereavement, multiple births, poverty, illness or disability.

Home-Start Manchester North has volunteers supporting families in the following communities- Harpurhey, Moston, Blackley, Collyhurst, Beswick, Newton Heath, Crumpsall, Cheetham, Levenshulme, Gorton, Ardwick, Ancoats, Miles Platting.

There are seven Home-Starts working across Greater Manchester. Between them they support 500 families and 1,000 children. They are: Home-Start Bury, Home-Start Bolton, Home-Start Manchester North, Home-Start Manchester South, Home-Start Oldham, Stockport & Tameside, Home-Start Rochdale, Home-Start Trafford & Salford.