

Annual Report

August 2022 to August 2023



Another busy year!

Although the charity only has a small team of committed volunteers, they all went the extra mile as always to support children, young people and their families across the Black Country once more.



Thank you

The Trustees would like to say a sincere thank you to the amazing individuals, groups, organisations, churches, businesses and wonderful collection points, who helped them support so many in the past year. They could not do what they do without this kind support.

October 2022 Half-term event

The Charity were fortunate to receive funding from the Arnold Clark Charitable Trust for a community event in September 2023. Trustees partnered up with the brilliant team from Just Straight Talk in Coseley, who organised a free Half term family event for Coseley families who may otherwise have been unable to enjoy a treat, to enjoy crafts, food and a community cinema at a local church hall. Special thanks to Shona, Dave and Neil for all their hard work organising and putting on the event.



Christmas 2022

There was a considerable rise in the number of requests for support this year, not doubt due to the worsening cost-of-living crisis and more referrers becoming aware of the support the charity can offer for the disadvantaged children/young people they support.

The Trustees were devastated when they had to make the heartbreaking decision to close off referrals as there were not enough gifts coming in to meet increased demand. Numerous appeals were made for support through local media contacts, social media etc and the charity was fortunate that their wonderful supporters rose to the challenge and donations started to flood in. After a stressful few days, it was a relief to be able to contact those whose requests the team had been unable to fulfil previously and say that gifts could now be provided.

How many gifts did they give out?

By the time the volunteers took a well-earned break for Christmas, they had given out **12,485** gifts to children and young people across the Black Country, who may otherwise have thought Santa had forgotten them.

Who did they support?

The charity took referrals from Children's Centres, Housing support, Social Services, Family Nurses, Schools, charities, community, voluntary and faith sector groups across the Black Country. In addition to giving out gifts, here are some examples of other support they gave during Christmas 2022:

- Brokered a hot meal for 100 families on Christmas Day
- Provided goody bags for 80 children whose families were homeless and living in temporary accommodation over Christmas
- Provided on-call support to Brierley Hill Police station in event of burglaries over the Christmas period.
- Provided grotto presents for Brierley Hill Market so children could see Santa even if their parents were on a budget
- Donated books, games and toys to We Love Carers to help the families they support. We also helped with their Breakfast with Santa

Working in partnership with other charities, groups and organisations

- Giving Hands Mission – were offered donations to the project to support families who were struggling.
- Through Circus Starr, who again kindly donated free tickets, children and their families from Woodside Primary School enjoyed a free circus performance as a January treat.
- At the end of the appeal they donated a sizeable donation of food and toiletries to Black Country Foodbank to support local families who were struggling.

Our brilliant Business Ambassadors

Brett Harris and the Blaze Angels, who celebrated 11 years as Business Ambassadors in 2022, were on a mission as always. They connected with their existing family, friends and customers and brought in new support as they do every year.

Brett also organised an epic fundraising Spinathon at JD Gyms, Brierley Hill, raising an incredible £1,254.00 to purchase gifts for the charity.



Why we do what we do!

Our team of amazing volunteers are committed to making a difference at Christmas, so no child thinks that Santa has forgotten them and we have received some wonderful feedback as always from last year's recipients. This motivates us to do what we do every year and makes the hundreds of hours our team spend on the appeal worth every minute!

Easter Egg Appeal 2023



After a successful pilot appeal in 2022 in Dudley borough only, the Trustees decided to broaden the 2023 appeal to the Black Country. They aimed to provide a chocolate treat for children who may otherwise not get one.

A poster was created and circulated to regular supporters, local media contacts and via the Facebook page and the response was truly incredible. Over 4389 chocolate treats were donated.



Here is little Archie getting an egg from the Easter Bunny.

Our charity is not just for Christmas

Knowing that local families and communities need help all year round, the charity tries to keep that Christmas sparkle shining for the rest of the year too, providing birthday presents and Easter eggs. There has been a growing demand for birthday presents in the past year, which reflects the fact that more families than ever are struggling and living in difficult circumstances.

The charity also provides support for families fleeing domestic abuse and other life-changing challenges, providing toys to replace those that may have been left behind.

Future plans

The biggest challenge for the past few years has been to secure a permanent base to run the year-round appeal and the charity has been fortunate to secure a unit in the Merry Hill Centre, which they moved into in August 2023 ready to launch the Christmas appeal. The Trustees would like to express their sincere thanks to those who have supported them in this journey and also to the Merry Hill Centre for kindly offering a base.

Kind supporters

The charity has been blessed with some amazing supporters both at Christmas 2022 and Easter 2023, plus the committed collection point network that has grown in the past 12 months.

Cllr Sue Greenaway, Mayor of Dudley 2022/2023 kindly chose Santa's Black Country Toy Appeal as one of her charities of the year. They were fortunate to receive an incredible donation of just over £12,000 in August 2023 and the Trustees were extremely grateful for this boost to the charity.

The Charity was also chosen by Cllr Chris Towe, Mayor of Walsall 2023/2024, as one of his charities of the year, purely supporting in the Walsall Area and libraries across Walsall were to be collection points during his term as Mayor. The Trustees were most appreciative of this kind support which will hopefully boost the support available for Walsall for the coming year.