



Friends of Harmony House Dagenham CIC Information Booklet



Buses:

From **Beckton** or **Rainham** -287 or 173 stop either at the Leisure Centre on the A13 Road or the Chequers.

From **Romford** - 174 or 175 to the Chequers and walk along Goresbrook Road.

From **Barking** - 62 to Becontree Station.
287 to the Leisure Centre

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Thank you for your interest in supporting the work of Harmony House Dagenham CIC

A Welcome from the Chief Executive of Harmony House Dagenham

Dear Friends of Harmony House,

Welcome to our first edition, and thank you for agreeing to be one of our supporters.

In these difficult financial times there is tremendous pressure on all our resources, including our precious time. This also means that there is greater pressure on those in most need; and this will be increasingly so in the future as both political parties look for "creative" ways of making front line services more efficient.

Harmony House has a history of helping the most vulnerable in the community and, with your support, will continue to be able to do so.

The smallest amount that you give is invaluable to us and will "return to you sevenfold"

With sincere thanks

Marie Kearns

Chief Executive

Harmony House Dagenham

The Benefits of becoming a Friend of Harmony House:

How you can help

- Satisfaction of becoming a volunteer in one of many aspects of Harmony House;
- Helping organise events and helping on the day;
- Helping with admin;
- Helping with IT;
- Helping in the childcare centre;
- Customer service and hospitality;
- Gardening.

As a Friend of Harmony House you would also be entitled to a reduction in the hire of a space in Harmony House. Hiring the dining room and catering staff to a gathering of friends for a meal one evening, or for a party.

Harmony House Dagenham today

At Harmony House we offer the services below, but with your help we would like to include.....

- IT Classes
- ESOL Classes
- Hire of Office Space
- Hire of space for private events
- Hairdressing Academy
- Catering
- Third Party Reporting Site for Race Hate Crimes
- Support for families with disabled children
- Dementia Support
- Hire of venue for Children's Parties
- Childcare Centre
- Silver Surfers
- Toastmasters (public speaking)

Why we need your help and Support

Harmony House became a Community Interest Company of 17th March 2009, and as such we receive no regular funding from the Government or the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.

Any profits that Harmony House makes will be put back into providing for the local community.

We have to apply for any funding needed for classes and services for the local community.

With your regular help, either financial and/or as a volunteer, we will be able to plan for classes and/ or services we would undertake with the knowledge that financially we would be able to.

Thank you for your interest in supporting the work of Friends of Harmony House Dagenham CIC

A small part of the History of Harmony House

Harmony House occupies the site of the former Sacred Heart Convent Secondary School. The location has provided education and training for young people for over seventy years.

At each stage of its history, the work on the campus responded to a specified need at a specific time.

The new purpose-built block which was opened in September 2001 aimed to provide a coherent service of education, training, health and other services in a multi-cultural setting. Central to the provision is the beautiful Sacred Space, which is conducive to reflection, meditation and prayer.

The Childhood Centre

The Early Childhood Centre provides full-day education and care for children three months to five years. It has been established in close co-operation with the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and the Trustees of Harmony House. There are 79 childcare places. The Childhood Centre is open from 8am to 6pm, fifty weeks a year.

The philosophy of the Childhood Centre is based on the belief that care and education must be integrated. We also believe in working closely with parents so as to provide the best for each child. Staff are appointed with appropriate qualifications in order to best develop this philosophy. The children's cultural diversity is recognised and celebrated.

In the Ofsted Inspection Report 2009 Harmony House Dagenham Childcare Centre was awarded "Good" in every category

FROM PARIS -TO- LONDON- TO- CHIGWELL- TO- DAGENHAM- TO- HARMONY
HOUSE
1866 1870 1896 1931 1993

SYNOPSIS OF THE CONGREGATION'S ORIGIN, FOUNDER, AND ITS SPREAD TO ENGLAND.

A young French priest from Alsace-Lorraine in 1866 founded the Congregation of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Working in Paris in the slum areas of Rue de Vaugirard, he met with poverty, degradation of women living in the streets, and the utter despair of so many girls and women who were "forced" to sell themselves into prostitution that they might barely live.

Some of these early Sisters who rallied around to help him in this vital work, were English girls living as governesses in Parisian homes, others were from Germany. Almost against his will, he found himself the founder of a young "Congregation" which was given the blessing of the Bishop of Versailles.

With the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, he realised it was vital to open a small house of refuge in Stratford, near London; he was welcomed into the diocese by Cardinal Manning. By 1896 the Sisters were able to invest in their Motherhouse in Chigwell, Essex. In 1903 they became a totally separate Congregation from the French Servantes du Sacre Coeur; yet, keeping still the original spirit of the Founder and his aim to work with the most abject and rejected persons in society.

Schools in and around the poorest parts of the London area were opened for the children; classes were given to help young women learn a trade and so live a poor but decent life.

The Sisters came to Dagenham, Essex in 1928 and worked in the primary school in St. Peter's Parish and taught the older children up to the age of fourteen years. The first convent was built by our Motherhouse, Chigwell. It was Bishop Doubleday who had invited the Sisters to take over St. Peter's School in 1933.

During World War II, Both Sisters and children of the St. Peter's School were evacuated to a safer area in the country, 1939 – 1945.

In 1965, St. Peter's School moved to a new location, just across from the original primary school, to the area opposite St. Peter's Church.

In 1962 the Sacred Heart School for Girls was opened on land behind the Convent. Between 1989 and 1992, this Girls' School was gradually amalgamated with Bishop Ward School for Boys and it became known as All Saints School.

In 1993, Sacred Heart School was demolished, except for the Domestic Science Block. In 1993, the decision was made to use this block for refugees. Sr. Rosemary, the then Superior of the Dagenham Convent became the first Director.

Under the then Director, Sister Margaret Gallagher the needs of the area were identified as Childcare Training, Childcare and Education. A European Social Fund Grant was obtained in 1997 in partnership with the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham. Links have been established with similar projects in Germany, Spain & Italy.

On Pentecost Sunday morning 31st May 1998, a severe fire ravaged Harmony House. The building was out of commission for three months, ESOL classes took place at the Convent and the crèche was accommodated at St. Peter's Parish Hall.

In September 1998 a full-day Childcare Program was established, ESOL - English for Speakers of Other Languages caters for the refugees from various countries. There are 24 2-hour sessions. These include classes for pre-beginners to advanced levels. Computer Literacy & Information Technology Classes are also part of the Harmony House Programme. Various other classes such as Dressmaking & Design, Woodwork & Design as well as Aromatherapy caters for individual interests.

The foundation for the new Harmony House was begun in December 1998. This project was funded by the Congregation of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, Chigwell.

The new building will enable further educational and training projects to be offered to those who wish to develop their God-given talents



One of the rooms in the Childhood Centre



St Peters Church, Goresbrook Road



Conference Room at Harmony House



The Sacred Space At Harmony House