



Positive outlook – Catholic ITN newsreader Julie Etchingam with fellow patron of Anchor House Bishop Thomas McMahon of Brentwood, at the launch of the homeless charity's ambitious fund-raising campaign

Charity's £9.3m bid to give home and hope

James Kelly

AN award-winning Catholic homeless charity has launched a major fund-raising campaign to re-develop its premises.

Based in Newham in London's East End, Anchor House was previously a seafarers' mission in the Diocese of Brentwood but since the 1980s has worked with the homeless. Last year, the charity was recognised as a National Centre of Excellence and researchers from Oxford Economics recently found that it saves taxpayers more than £5 million a year by helping to turn around the lives of its homeless residents.

Speaking at the launch of its 'Home and Hope Appeal' at the Inner Temple in London's legal district, Anchor House director Keith Fernet explained that the aim was to "raise

£9.3 million to build a block of 25 'move-on' flats, training kitchens, self-catering kitchens, laundry facilities, vocational training zones and meeting spaces. A complete re-vamp of about a third of our complex. Move-on is the most crucial part because there is a sense of isolation when they leave us so we want to give them the ability to develop the skills to live on their own but be close to Anchor House."

When asked by *The Catholic Times* about the strengths of the project, one of its patrons, John Bird MBE, founder of the *Big Issue*, said: "Anchor House has recognised that you need to give people a hand up and not a hand out; that you have to stop warehousing the poor, the defeated, the needy and you have to give them an exit strategy out of poverty and dependency. It is one of the best practices that we need to see rolled out and we need to see it duplicated wherever

homelessness presents its ugly face."

Bishop Thomas McMahon of Brentwood, a trustee of the charity, said: "It has become a real flagship for what a home for the homeless should be because it's holistic in its approach; it approaches the needs of the whole person."

The evening launch was compered by ITN newsreader Julie Etchingam, who told *The Catholic Times*: "People go through the most horrendous experiences then end up on the doorstep of Anchor House and it offers them hope, practical help, faith and a positive outlook . . . it invites you in and nurtures change."

As well as patrons and supporters of Anchor House, the launch was also attended by former residents, including Perry O'Brien, who has just been named as one of the first community organisers working with the Government's Big Society initiative.

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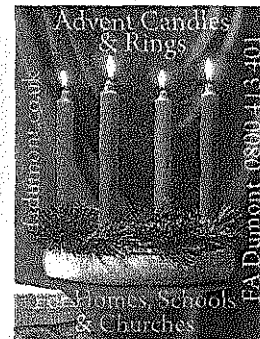
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real hope**

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