

CATHOLIC LIFE

## Paxman visits the homeless

Newsnight presenter visits Anchor House in east London and hears stories of homelessness from its residents

By STAFF REPORTER on Wednesday, 13 July 2011



Patron Jeremy Paxman with staff and homeless residents at Anchor House

Stories of homelessness have captured the attention of Newsnight presenter Jeremy Paxman.

Normally Mr Paxman is the one telling the compelling story. But last week the BBC journalist and patron of homeless charity Anchor House listened intently as some of east London's homeless residents recalled what it was like for them without the support of their family and friends.

The centre is located in Canning Town in the London Borough of Newham. Mr Paxman is helping to raise more than £9.3 million to help re-develop the award-winning residential and life-skills centre.

"What struck me most was how these amazing people, who have obviously been through quite a lot in their lives, have not given up and now have huge ambitions for the future," Mr Paxman said.

"I think it's great. Inspiring, actually. They are addressing the root causes of their problems and they now have plans for the future. For me, the single most startling thing about homelessness is how incredibly thin the line is between a settled, ordered life and complete chaos. It can be losing your job, the break-up of a relationship, a problem with drink or drugs, or sometimes just a family row."

Anchor House director Keith Fernett says the Canning Town charity is very excited to have Mr Paxman on board. "Jeremy is a strong advocate of finding long-term solutions to homelessness and we are very pleased to have his support," he said.

"He will be working with us to help raise £9.3 million through our appeal to ensure our much-needed work in the Newham community continues.

"Our mission is to build a new 21st-century building, with a purpose-built block of 25 studio flats, workshops, a new catering training facility, leisure and recreational areas."

Formerly a seaman's mission, Anchor House was established in 1962 by the Catholic London Inter-Diocesan Council of the Apostleship of the Sea.

Its original purpose was to provide temporary accommodation to out-of-work seafarers coming into and out of the nearby ports.

To donate to the centre, visit [Anchorhouseuk.org](http://Anchorhouseuk.org).

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