

CITY GATES CHURCH

Community Magazine

Take your FREE copy

UNIVERSITY
ISN'T FREE

5 FREE WAYS
TO HELP CHILDREN

SUCCEED

A REFUGEE'S
EXPERIENCE OF
EDUCATION

FROM EXCLUSION
TO EMBRACE

Hello Community!

This edition of the City Gates community magazine is packed with information on the topic of education. Education is a lifelong pursuit that remains relevant and crucial, regardless of age. While it is commonly associated with formal schooling in early years, the importance of education transcends time and extends to individuals of all ages. As we progress through life, our personal and professional circumstances evolve, presenting new challenges and opportunities. By embracing education, even in later stages of life, we can continuously expand our knowledge, acquire new skills, and adapt to a rapidly changing world.

So, whether you are a student, a parent, an educator, or simply someone with a thirst for knowledge, we're sure this edition will provide you with invaluable information, insightful articles and thought-provoking discussions on the transformative power of education.

Again we would like to thank our senior pastor, Stephen Derbyshire, along with the entire church, who all demonstrate a deep care for the community with initiating numerous endeavors aimed at providing support, fostering involvement, and imparting knowledge to the local residents.

Our calendar is always packed with a range of events and activities. You are invited to stop by and have a coffee or visit our website to find out what is going on at City Gates Church. For a full list of events and activities visit CityGates.London or CityGatesBooking.com

If you would like to book our venue for hire, please call: **020 3633 7123** or email hello@citygatesbooking.com

City Gates Conference Centre
25 - 29 Clements Road
Ilford, IG1 1BH
www.citygatesbooking.com



A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN



WITH SUPPORT FROM



Ilford Community Grocery has been open for just over 2 months now and we have seen a tremendous amount of support from our community for this incredible initiative, which aims to offer affordable and high-quality groceries to low-income families and individuals. A significant portion of these items obtained are surplus supplies from food distributors and supermarkets, preventing them from being wasted and instead redistributing them to the store.

Members of Ilford Community Grocery can sign up for a year membership for the low price of £5, with which they get access to daily £5 shops consisting of 12 items from all across the shelves.

Of course, the grocery couldn't run without great staff. We had a small chat with Alvaro, the store manager to see how things are going 2 months on and to get a closer look on what's on in store.

How are things going 2 months on?

It has been going great, we now have over 510 members signed up to the store. Of course with this many new members, our days have been very busy, but we're always happy to help.

Can you tell us a bit more about the courses that will be running at the community grocery?

We have not started any courses yet but we are in the process of starting several. Some of the courses we plan to run include cookery classes, debt advice and health education. These courses



Alvaro Adair - Store Manager

are intended to provide essential life skills and advice for whoever may need them. We will share more information in the coming weeks.

What roles are available for volunteers looking to help out?

Some of the roles include working at the till, making sure our shelves are stocked, signing people up to become members, and generally making sure our customers are well looked after and have a great experience at our store.

How can people get involved with helping out at the store?

We are always looking for more volunteers to help out, so please get in touch by visiting us in store or by calling. Also if you are, or know someone employed in the food industry, we would greatly appreciate any donations from food suppliers and supermarkets.

If you would like to volunteer to become a part of our community grocery please scan the QR code below and fill in the form.



Get in touch!

📞 020 3422 6511

📷 @communitygroceryilford

📌 Community Grocery Ilford

✉ ilford@communitygrocery.org.uk

Five Free Ways to Help Children Succeed

With the cost-of-living crisis overwhelming National news, we could all benefit from a reminder that our children can still succeed despite increased grocery costs leading to tighter purse strings. Here are five wallet-friendly activities that families can engage in to help our children to thrive:

1. Establish D.E.A.R time

My children know that every train journey we take must be accompanied by a good book - for each of us!

One impactful way to foster a love for learning in children is through reading. Establishing a weekly family reading hour (Drop Everything And Read time) not only creates a bonding experience, but also cultivates a lifelong habit of reading. Reading helps children develop their vocabulary, comprehension, and creative writing skills. We may not be able to take our children to every continent at present, but we can encourage children to explore various genres and discover new worlds with the turn of each page, creating empathy and understanding of other cultures and experiences. The benefits of reading extend beyond academic success, enhancing a person's holistic development.

2. Fall in love with your local library

My fondest memories of my children at a younger age are of us all sat cross-legged on the squared library carpet surrounded by books.

Libraries are a treasure chest waiting to be explored. Make it a family tradition, pencilled in the calendar to

visit the library monthly, at the very least. In addition to borrowing books, libraries often offer a range of activities for children, such as storytelling sessions, workshops, and movie screenings. After watching a family movie, take the opportunity to delve deeper by researching the time-period, costumes, language, and culture all for no fee at the library. This interactive approach to learning will support children's progress, fostering their curiosity whilst simultaneously developing their research skills.

3. Play 'old-school' board games

My family's go-to games are Scrabble, Chess and Monopoly. A more modern one we love is called Dobble.

In today's digital age, traditional board games are often overlooked. However, rediscovering and playing 'old-school' board games provides numerous benefits for children. Board games promote social interaction, communication skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. They also teach children about rules, fair play, and the importance of perseverance. So dust off those board games from your youth, unplug Netflix for an afternoon, and spend quality time as a family, creating memories and strengthening family bonds.

4. Visit Museums

I've found involving my children in the logistics of planning trips helps them to take ownership of the day and immerse themselves in the adventure!

Visiting museums is a fantastic way to expose children to art, history, science, and culture. While some museums

may have entry fees, there are several museums that offer free exhibits (i.e. the British Museum and Science Museum). Take advantage of these opportunities and plan family trips during holiday periods. Encourage your children to ask questions, engage in discussion, and learn about different aspects of the world around them. Museum, farm and park visits inspire creativity, critical thinking, and a love for lifelong learning.

5. Keep a creative diary

Last Christmas, my children used their diaries to write a full, comedic nativity play, following the conventions of a playscript!

Inspire your children to write through creative journaling. Why not recycle an unused notebook or make one using scrap paper? Encourage your children to write about their experiences, thoughts, dreams, or anything that inspires them. This practice enhances their writing skills, boosts their creativity, and allows them to reflect on their emotions and experiences. It can become a cherished keepsake for years to come and serve as a valuable outlet for self-discovery and personal growth. Keeping a diary allows your children to write without fear of getting something wrong. They can explore and develop their craft as writers in a judgement-free zone, and in doing so, fall in love with writing, whilst becoming more and more fluent.

So we see, helping our children to succeed doesn't have to break the bank. By implementing these activities into their lives, you can support their education, foster creativity, and strengthen family bonds. Remember, the most valuable investment we can make in our children is through our time and attention. Let us create a nurturing environment where children thrive, despite the challenges we face in our economy.

Zara Muirhead
CEO & Founder of Love Literacy
www.love-literacy.com



Love Literacy is a tuition service dedicated to enhancing the academic progress of young people through online and face-to-face supplementary education.

I LOVE LITERACY



From Exclusion to Embrace:

The Transformative Power of Inclusion for Children with Special Needs and their Families at City Gates Church



Psalm 139:13-14 (NIV)

"For you created my inmost being you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made your works are wonderful, I know that full well."

City Gates Church Ilford occasionally holds baby dedication services. During these services, parents introduce their precious children to our congregation, and we commit to nurturing and guiding them on a path illuminated by the teachings of Jesus Christ with joy. Uplifting melodies and heartfelt prayers mark this special moment as we warmly welcome these children into our church family.

While we offer our unwavering support, we seldom acknowledge the enormity of our responsibility. Within this beautiful time of dedication lies the possibility that some children may have unique needs, requiring our exceptional attention to address their spiritual growth. These children, blessed with diverse abilities and challenges, cause us to extend our provisions and reach deeper into empathetic compassion to meet their unique needs.

For the parents, this may evoke many emotions as they embark on a unique parenting journey, facing many uncertainties. The difficulties faced by these parents are multifaceted. They may face societal stigmas and a lack of understanding or inclusion from others who may not comprehend their daily unique challenges. Moreover, parents of children with special needs may experience

moments of isolation as they navigate a different path from their peers who have typically developing children meeting all the significant milestones. Also, they may struggle to find a sense of belonging within their community owing to the additional care and attention their child requires.

Isaiah 64:8 (NIV)

"Yet you, Lord, are our father. We are the clay; you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand."

When I first stepped into City Gates Church, I carried the weight of my responsibilities as a parent, knowing that I had two sons with unique journeys ahead. One of my sons blossomed in this loving community, finding his place among the fantastic worship team where his talents thrived. However, my second son faced challenges, struggling to navigate a world that often failed to understand and accommodate his unique needs. In those moments, I felt completely isolated.

At the time, my second son had been rejected by numerous schools, including Special education institutions. As a result, he had no school placement, leaving him home for nearly six years. It was a time filled with uncertainty as I sought the right educational environment to meet his needs.

2 Chronicles 1:1 (NKJV)

"Now, Solomon, the son of David, was strengthened in his kingdom, and the Lord, his God, was with him and exalted him exceedingly."

City Gates Church shone brightly amid uncertainty as our beacon of hope. My son discovered a safe space within its walls that embraced us with open arms, offering acceptance and love. Within these grounds, my son's journey of growth and progress unfolded in ways I never could have imagined. I witnessed him blossoming, forming friendships, and developing an unquenchable love for the services. He would sit for hours, eagerly absorbing the wisdom of the Church's sermons. His newfound confidence even led him to venture to camp meetings on his own without the aid of his older brother, defying the limitations that once held him back. City Gates Church became more our place of transformation and boundless possibilities through the power of Jesus.

This belonging for my son illuminated a pressing issue within our larger church community. We became acutely aware that accepting and including children with special needs were only sometimes widely understood or embraced due to a lack of awareness and knowledge. It became evident that to support and nurture every child's unique needs fully, a specialised team was necessary—one dedicated to ensuring that every child, regardless of their challenges, could thrive within our church family. While my son found a loving home within City Gates Church, I recognise that each child is different and may respond differently based on their unique needs.

In response to this and much more, I decided to be part of this exceptional team that offers a range of support services tailored to the diverse needs of our families, from Special Needs Sessions and Parent support groups to one-on-one Sessions and much more.

This dedicated SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Team comprises passionate and committed individuals who support children and families facing special needs challenges. The SEND Team builds on personalised strategies to help every child actively participate in worship services and church events.

Within the walls of the SEND ministry, we have witnessed the tears and heard the silent cries of parents who have longed for a safe place where their precious children are embraced with open arms and celebrated for the unique gifts they possess. We witness the stories of those who have been absent from the Church for years, burdened

by the absence of a safe space. For too long, they have carried the weight of isolation, searching in vain for a place that would nurture both their spiritual growth and the growth of their children.

Nevertheless, we believe that creating an inclusive church community is a responsibility everyone shares, not a one-time act but an ongoing commitment. Our community values love, compassion, and acceptance, as demonstrated by Jesus Christ. By embracing our role in the lives of children with special needs and their families, we can help them reach their full potential, nurture their spirits, and deepen their faith in Jesus. So let us journey together, embracing inclusion and celebrating the beauty of diversity within our church family, *'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty (Zechariah 4:6 NIV).*

Ruth D-Whyte



To find out more about the SEND ministry at City Gates Church please visit www.citygates.london/get-connected/special-needs/



UNIVERSITY ISN'T FREE

Obtaining a university degree has become an important career milestone for domicile students over the years here in the UK. It has become more accessible for many despite differences in social, economic and cultural backgrounds. Society presents the idea that a young person can go to university, get a degree, and subsequently get a good job and improve their standard of living all without paying it back *until you're older*.

There is a huge financial cost for university students which is often less discussed. Many students know about and receive student finance but since tuition has increased and maintenance grants scrapped, increasing numbers of students are having to subsidise their living expenses. In addition to this, the repayment of these student loans can cause uncertainty and fear.

This year, the government changed the calculations behind 2023 student intake paying back their loans. This means that there is a larger emphasis on individuals paying back the money with interest, rather than using taxpayer funds to support its citizens. To the right are some resources to shed more information on the topic of student finance and repayment schemes.



Student Finance England

This youtube link provides a visual aid to understanding student finance with various videos available.



List of the various student finance available

On this webpage, you will be able to see and click on the relevant aspects of student finance that relate to your education.



Paying back the loans

Find out which student repayment scheme you are on and all necessary information regarding paying back the loans you have taken.



2023-2024 changes being made

Find out the changes that the government has introduced this year regarding repaying student finance for students starting university/higher education short courses/initial teaching training in 2023 and thereafter.



Martin Lewis on Good Morning Britain, May 2023

Martin Lewis, renowned financial expert, explains in a video about the changes being made to student finance England and the impact it will have on individuals.



Having an understanding about student finance is important when considering university because once you have a degree, the debt remains and will still have to be paid (with interest). However, should this hinder students from academically progressing?

**Author: Rae-Anne Cohen,
PhD student in Education**

A REFUGEE'S EXPERIENCE OF EDUCATION

I initially came to England as an asylum seeker around the age of 16 without any family or friends and as a result of my age, I was enrolled into Barking & Dagenham college. It wasn't easy, but I was focused on starting college and working hard to get the education that I needed.

My first day in college was in September 2010, studying IT BTEC. I enjoyed the class and completed that course. However, I chose to change my subject to accounting as a result of peer pressure and an apparent lack of jobs at that time. I finished my Level 1, 2 and 3 AAT accounting and attempted Level 4 but I found this level extremely difficult and failed.

There were many barriers I faced as an asylum seeker (and then as a refugee) whilst studying in college. My encounters with the Home Office were challenging, having to navigate a new country, government and strict policies to adhere to. I did not have my parents and I was under social care. I lived with constant fear and lacked stability and finances. Additionally, I suffered from mental health issues and struggled with English language (reading and writing) since it was not my native tongue. In and amongst all

of this, I still had to attend college, do my homework and achieve good grades – it was beyond hard.

At the time, failing Level 4 AAT was difficult to process since I was raised to be hard working and to achieve academic success. However, I was able to find my passion and formulate a career that I am able to grow in which has guided me to return to education again.

Reflecting on my experiences, I can see that it was difficult for me to make choices concerning my education – I did not ask any questions nor for help. If I could share any piece of advice, it would be to ask, don't keep things to yourself! There is no such thing as a stupid question, and everyone needs help at some point in their lives. My favourite quote is "Ask and you shall receive" and since I started to ask post-college, my life changed.

Author: FZ



AGES:
0-4 YRS

Sit down & Relax.



Grounded Coffee shop is our very own coffee shop here at City Gates. Here every cup tells a story and every visit leaves you grounded in pure coffee bliss. Discover the true essence of exceptional coffee and immerse yourself in an oasis of taste, comfort, and genuine hospitality.

Visit us today and experience the finest coffee in Ilford. Beyond the exceptional coffee and mouthwatering treats, Grounded Coffee embraces a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Whether you're catching up with friends, diving into a good book, or simply seeking a moment of tranquility, our cozy seating areas provide the ideal setting. Our friendly staff are always ready to offer recommendations and engage in friendly conversation, making you feel like a part of our vibrant coffee-loving community.

Free wifi is provided making the coffee shop a great place to get your work done or for quick lunch meetings. You can also freely use one of our electrical sockets in the area at one of our charging points.

Grounded Coffee shop is also available for hire. If you would like to book please call: **020 3633 7123** or email hello@citygatesbooking.com



PARENTS & TODDLERS

TUESDAYS
1.30PM - 3PM
(SCHOOL TERM-TIME ONLY)

ALL ARE WELCOME!

**ADMISSION:
£2 PER FAMILY**

020 8514 0188



**25-29 CLEMENTS ROAD
ILFORD, IG1 1BH (3rd floor)**

Elim Charity 251549



CAP
DEBT
HELP



Lifting the weight of debt

Free debt advice and personal
support in Ilford

Book your free appointment

0800 328 0006 capdebthelp.org

In partnership with City Gates Church – www.citygates.london

  CAPuk  CAPuk_org  CAPukorg

christians
against
poverty

CAP