

# *News From St Margaret's*

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## *Families Needed!*

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As we approach the end of the year we are encouraged from all quarters to reflect on the events of the year we are leaving behind, and to look forward with optimism to the approaching year. We normally consider the significant events which have taken place during the past year, and we are reminded of these by television reviews, newspaper articles, and magazine reviews. We reflect on how major events have shaped our world, and how sometimes, a major event can have a very real influence on our daily lives.

For a number of families this year they will reflect on the journey they have undertaken, hand in hand with this organisation, which has led to the creation of their family. Couples have made the transition to parents. For some this has meant becoming parents of two or even three children in a very short space of time. There has been a lot to cope with, for children and for parents. It is also the culmination of a journey towards parenthood, and towards the finding of a new mum and dad. At the same time it is the beginning of a new journey, of a new life together with a new and defined purpose as a family.

As we approach the new year this year we would invite you to reflect on your decision to adopt. Plan ahead with optimism for your family. If you are thinking of adoption please reflect on your decision, and take the time to follow up with a visit or a

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call to St Margaret's. As adoptive parents you will know that you will make a difference to the lives of children.

## *Progress During 2008*

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The past year has been a very busy one for St Margaret's. Our social workers have been extremely busy in the preparation of Home Study Reports and with the arrangements for

We are currently recruiting couples who wish to adopt sibling groups, children over three years old, children with special needs and children from minority ethnic backgrounds

placements of children. We have maintained a high level of placement activity. During the year 2006/ 07 we placed a total of 16 children, and we managed to maintain the same level of activity for the year 2007/ 08, once again placing 16 children. Since April this year we have increased our workload and we anticipate that the number of children we place this year will be greater than the previous year.

### **Placements Made Since April 08**

Single Child	6
Sibling Group of Two	2
Sibling Group of Three	2
Relinquished Baby	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>

### **Placements Agreed and in Progress**

Single Child	1
Sibling Group of Two	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>

We also have a further group of couples who are approved and we are following up enquiries on behalf of these couples. 2008/ 09 is likely to set a new record for the number of placements made by the agency in the recent past.

We are currently inviting couples who are thinking of adopting to get in touch for more information. We are currently recruiting couples who wish to adopt sibling groups, children over three years old, children with special needs and children from minority ethnic backgrounds.

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## *In The Hot Seat—Pamela Teale*

**What made you apply for a post at St Margaret's?**

I had worked at St Margaret's before. I left to work with the Aberlour Trust with young people who have mental health problems. I was keen to come back to St Margaret's since I feel that adoption is such a positive choice for children who need permanence.

**What part of the job are you most looking forward to?**

I do like working with groups so Preparation Groups will be interesting, but I suspect that the most rewarding part of the job will be when I actually place a child with a couple I have assessed.

**When you are not at work, how do you relax?**

I am a very sociable person, and I spend a lot of time with friends. I enjoy eating out or eating in, and I like to go walking. I also have a small cottage on

South Uist which I use as my bolt hole for respite from the fast lane. I love taking photographs, and my favourite toy at the moment is my



i-mac which I use to organise, tweak and show my pictures and videos.

**What books are you reading at the moment?**

I have just finished reading the *God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy. I found this to be the most amazing book and would thoroughly recommend it. I also like fantasy novels and I would read anything by Philip Pullman or Terry Pratchett.

**If you could invite three celebrities to dinner, who would you invite?**

I would invite Philip Pullman

who I think would be wonderful company. I would try to persuade him to write a sequel to his trilogy. I would invite Richard Branson who strikes me as a very sociable person who has done lots of interesting things. Perhaps I could persuade him to become a patron of St Margaret's. Finally I would invite Alexa Chung. She used to present *Pop World* on Saturdays. I think she is clever and cool and I would like to have been like her!

**If there was a fire in your house, what would you save?**

Funnily enough we had a fire about 20 years ago! My memory is of 'phoning the Fire Brigade in the middle of the smoking living room. In the event I saved my two boys and, of course, my handbag!

**What would you like Santa to leave under the tree for you?**

What I would like from Santa is a Blackberry. I hope he is reading this!

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## *News Round Up*

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We have had a number of changes to the staff team in the past couple of months. Many of you will already be aware that both Merlyn Ritchie and Claire Stone have now left St Margaret's. Both Merlyn and Claire have moved back to the public sector and have secured posts in the adoption and fostering section of two local authorities. We wish both Merlyn and Claire well in their new posts, and we look forward to meeting up with them in their new roles.

As Merlyn and Claire leave St Margaret's Pamela Teale and Margaret Hennessey have now joined the team. Both Pamela and Margaret have worked for St Margaret's before, and are delighted to rejoin their "family" for a second period of employment. Pamela has rejoined us from another voluntary organisation, the Aberlour Trust. While there Pamela gained experience in working with families and young people, and has developed her skills in the delivery of training programmes. Margaret has rejoined us from East Dunbartonshire Council, where she was a member of the adoption and fostering team. She brings with her an experience of the local authority set up and a greater understanding of the approach of the local authority to the adoption task. Both Pamela and Margaret were keen to return to St Margaret's, and we in turn are delighted to welcome them back to the Society.

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## *A Word on Fundraising*

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St Margaret's is a voluntary organisation and is a registered charity. We do not undertake a full fundraising programme since we are a small team and we do not have the resources. However, we do have some loyal supporters who regularly provide us with donations. We would like to express our grateful thanks to Joe Hynes and Robert Miller who have raised the magnificent sum of £9,700 for us through their annual golf tournament. HSBC bank contributed to this total and we are very grateful. Thanks also to Mandy McAndrew who recently completed the Inverness Marathon. Mandy has included St Margaret's in her sponsorship.

If you or any of your friends are thinking of competing in a charity fundraising event, please consider supporting St Margaret's. We are hoping to establish a presence on the Just Giving website in the near future to make donating easier.

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### **St Margaret's Children and Family Care Society**

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