

Photograph Captions:1007 - The Teen Challenge Team - Andy , Darren, Finlay, David & Richard.

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Article written by Sharron Hardwick

New Identities With Teen Challenge.

Five men with amazing transformation stories bring a message of hope to people struggling with addictions in Pembrokeshire. From lives of hopelessness, addiction and crime the men, shared how the loving Christian community of Teen Challenge gave them fresh visions of hope, during their visit to Community Church, Narberth last Sunday .

'We were labelled as hopeless junkies, a menace to society. Thanks to Teen Challenge and the forgiving love of Jesus, we now have new identities. Our lives are filled with hope and purpose' said Darren.

The men shared their life stories, demonstrating their dramatic transformations.

'At 14 I was drinking and smoking. My mum always prayed for me, but by 16 I was living rough. I know my mum's prayers were answered as a stranger called an ambulance, saving my life when I overdosed on heroin aged 17. My life was complete pain and misery, brought on by my own bad choices. Finally I made a good choice after meeting people from Teen Challenge, I joined their programme. With a shattered heart and a broken mind, I couldn't believe Jesus could love me. Then the penny dropped, I knew I'd been forgiven. It's been a long haul. It still amazes me that I am loved, forgiven and set free by Jesus.' shared Richard.

Local churches can be overwhelmed if people with severe addictions join them and 24 hour specialist care is required. This is where Teen challenge can help. Through their rehabilitation programmes they offer 24 hour support to people who's lives have been shattered by the ill effects of drugs and alcohol.

Andy paid a return visit to Narberth Community Church:'This was the first church I visited 2 years ago having just joined Teen Challenge. Through wrong choices, I became selfish, getting into drugs. What started off as fun, now had complete control over me. Heroine stripped away my identity. One day I was taking heroine with my girlfriend and she died, I was devastated. I cried out to God to help me. A friend invited me to Teen Challenge. Their discipline was tough, but I needed it. I fell to the floor on my knees and gave my life to God. It's good to return here and see how much I have moved on.' shared Andy.

Teen Challenge is safe environment for hurting people. They teach Christian principals, offer structure, education and practical studies, equipping people to utilise their gifts and fulfil their purpose in life.

Finlay shared how he found purpose:'I was brought up to fight. I started smoking and selling cannabis, then I took and sold amphetamine. I was so notorious that the serious crime squad drove me out of Glasgow, so I moved to London. Before long I returned to Glasgow with serious heroine addiction. It was there I went on the Teen Challenge bus. I'll never forget what one man said to me: 'The Lord's got a plan and purpose for your life.' After spending time with Christians who accepted and loved me, I gave my life to Jesus. But old habits were hard to break. I got into a pub fight and ended up in prison for attempted murder. I was going to turn my back on God, thinking 'I need to face this on my own.' but God had other plans and was with me in prison. I managed to stay out of trouble and keep off the drugs. My old mates couldn't believe it! Now I am on a Teen Challenge programme looking forward to my new purposeful life.'

Teen Challenge share the love of Jesus in practical ways through bus out reach schemes, cafés, rehabilitation and prison work. The nearest Teen Challenge centre is in Cross Hands.

If you or some one you know are struggling with addictions contact Teen challenge on 01269 842718.

Take the first step to getting a new life through the transforming power of Jesus.

Christian Community Church meet on Sundays, 10am in the Bloomfield Centre seminar room: 01994 419435.

