

**WOOD STREET MISSION**  
**150**  
 YEARS  
 1869-2019

HELPING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SINCE 1869

# POST

SPRING/SUMMER 2019



Mr. ALFRED ALSOP, Founder of the Institution, who died July 14th, 1902.

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# OutPost



Welcome to this latest edition of our newsletter, with this year being a poignant year for us as 2019 marks our 150th anniversary. It is with some regret that there should still be such a need

for our services, I'm not sure

that when our founder Alfred Alsop set up Wood Street Mission in 1869, he envisaged that the organisation that he created, would still be in existence now.

However the work that we do today is as relevant as it has always been and hopefully this edition of our newsletter will reflect how our projects continue to evolve.

The Family Basics project continues to provide families with everyday basic items. It's always pleasing when visitors are surprised at just how well laid out and organised this area of the building is and how welcoming it is for families.

The Christmas project once again proved to be a great success, which as ever proved to be a fantastic collaboration between our own staff team, regular volunteers and some 240 plus volunteers provided by our corporate supporters.

Our SmartStart project continues to grow with a 17% increase in the number of children from the previous year receiving new school uniform. Indeed this project has shown an 88% increase in the number of children receiving new school uniform, since the launch of SmartStart 4 years ago.

Over the past twelve months our campaign to improve children's literacy, through our Book Clubs, Book Roadshows (working directly with schools) together with supplying books to community organisations continues to grow and become an increasingly important area of our core work. With this in mind we are working to forge closer links with the National Literacy Trust and Read Manchester.

The scope and scale of our work would be impossible to do of course without the help of our wonderful supporters, so thank you to everyone that enables us to continue improving the life chances of local children.

**Des Lynch**, Manager

[des@woodstreetmission.org.uk](mailto:des@woodstreetmission.org.uk)

## Me and Wood Street

In each edition we want to introduce you to a member of the team and tell you a little more about them.

### Mark Gaffney SmartStart and Development Manager



I began at Wood Street in October 2016 on a 3-month contract and I still seem to be here. Don't know what happened there.

I came to Wood Street after managing Family Centres for a big charity and managing Children's Centres for a local authority for more years than I care to remember.

My main job here has been organising the SmartStart free school uniform programme, although I turn my hand to most things, if I can help.

We all do. It is what makes small charities work.

This will be my third year and I think SmartStart is going well and I hope everyone who uses it does too. Last year we helped 3,199 children all told.

That's a lot of uniform.

We have a great Manchester Uniform Supplier, David Luke, we get lots of referrals from workers and we place thousands of online orders which are delivered straight to the family home.

We share out donations of stationery, sportswear, backpacks, coats and other school accessories through our Family Basics Project where parents choose for themselves. We also use cash donations to top up supplies whenever donations dip, using friendly suppliers who help us with low prices, free delivery etc.

It's all about lots of small steps and it's all about team work. Everyone helps with SmartStart and without that it wouldn't work.



### Mayoral Visit

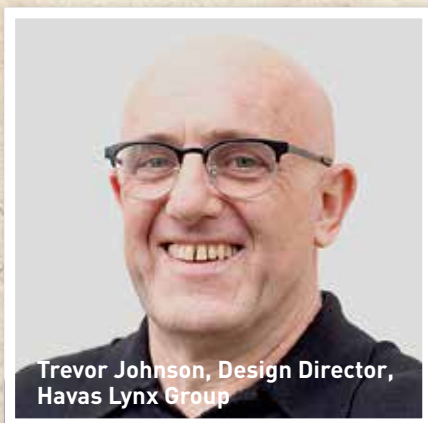
It was our absolute pleasure to welcome the Lord Mayor of Manchester, Councillor June Hitchen, to Wood Street earlier this year. Born and raised in Manchester, Councillor Hitchen was very keen to know as much as possible about our work and

especially the problems that our families face on a daily basis. It was important to us to have this opportunity to share information on the challenges we face as an organisation and importantly our view on the appalling levels of poverty in our community.

# Branding our Heritage

**WOOD STREET MISSION** **150** YEARS 1869-2019

**This year we are recognising 150 years of providing help and support to struggling families in Manchester and Salford.**



Trevor Johnson, Design Director, Havas Lynx Group

To mark the occasion, Salford-born Trevor Johnson, Design Director of the Havas Lynx Group has updated our branding.

Trevor has been a long-term supporter, passionate about what Wood Street Mission has meant to the local community and the families we have been able to help over the last 150 years. Trevor's connection with Wood Street Mission goes back generations, and he himself attended our youth club as

a teenager. We are delighted he has designed this as a gift to us for our 150th anniversary, incorporating our current logo and recognising the heritage of the charity.

We want to use our anniversary to acknowledge the many children and families who we have been able to help over the years, thanks to those who so generously support us, but also raise awareness of the number of children still living in poverty in our local area today. We are grateful to Trevor for his continued championing of our cause.

## Tough choices

Our 150th anniversary activity continues with a campaign which aims to further raise the profile of the work of Wood Street Mission. The campaign highlights the tough choices that families living in poverty have to face every day.

Ultimately, no-one chooses poverty, but for some families in Manchester and Salford the reality is choosing to pay rent or buy a school uniform; turn the heating on or do the family food shop; pack a school lunch or buy a bus pass.

Our campaign will look at these basic – but difficult – choices some people have to make, and how the support that Wood Street Mission provides helps make these situations easier for families in Manchester and Salford who are living on low income.

By providing children's clothing, school uniforms, toys, bedding, toiletries and, more recently, promoting the importance of literacy through our Book Clubs, we provide practical help to meet families' day-to-day needs and improve children's life chances for the future.

Look out for our campaign posters and adverts over the next few months. Find out more at [www.woodstreetmission.org.uk/choices](http://www.woodstreetmission.org.uk/choices)



### Rent or school uniform?

**Tough choice isn't it?  
No-one chooses poverty.**

But in Manchester and Salford, 48,000 children are living in poverty right now. Their families face these choices every day. You can help by choosing to support Wood Street Mission.

[WoodStreetMission.org.uk](http://WoodStreetMission.org.uk)



Wood Street Mission. Supporting children and families in Manchester and Salford since 1869.



# Literacy is at the heart of our special anniversary year

With the National Literacy Trust claiming that 1 in 8 disadvantaged children in the UK do not own a single book, it makes us even more determined to address those stats for our community.

That is why we are concentrating even more of our efforts on the power of books and the impact they have on children.



## Book Appeal 2019!

This year instead of Easter Eggs, we appealed for donations of brand-new books for children aged 0-16 years, to distribute through our Book Clubs and school Roadshows.

Our Book Appeal will help us provide children from low income families with brand new books that are theirs to keep. These books will then be distributed through our Book Clubs and Book Roadshows.

We asked supporters to donate new books suitable for children aged 0-16 years, fiction and non-fiction and you didn't let us down. We received thousands of wonderful titles which will enable us to deliver some outstanding work at the Book Clubs.

It doesn't stop with the donations of books as we are always looking for volunteers to help at our Book Clubs, with setting out the venue, running the activities and making sure children and their families have a great time.

We have to say a big thank you to UKFast who once again have placed our name in lights on their huge billboard on Princess Parkway. They have supported our appeal by acting as a drop off point and their teams have been incredibly generous with their donations and valuable time. Thanks everyone.



## Literacy Fun!

This year we have already touched hearts with our literacy projects and delivered a rather cool set of 'Book Trucks' to St Sebastian's Community Centre in Salford. The little visitors will really enjoy choosing a book whilst passing through.

Our worker bees were also incredibly busy and creative with this, once simple, little storage shed (shedlet). It'll be taking pride of place next to a Book Bench in one of the schools that we support. A great way to engage pupils during play time without them having to be in the library.



## Second Bookcase is in place!

We are so happy to see our second bookshelf in place at Northmoor Community Laundrette. We have been able to provide a bookshelf full of titles for children age 0-5. The venue is open daily giving children plenty of opportunities to pop in and take their favourite choice home. Thanks to the team at Northmoor Community Association for working alongside us and showing what can be achieved through a little collaboration.



## Book Clubs are go...

It may still be early in the year but we've already had a couple of great events.

We had a fabulous morning at our Book Club in the Addy Centre over in Wythenshawe. It was great to see so many happy faces all excited to choose their books.

We are also very grateful to the Openwork Foundation for awarding us a grant that will enable us to stage our Book Clubs throughout this year and our thanks go to our fabulous volunteers from UKFast and Sellick Partnership Limited who worked tirelessly at the event.

As part of the Wood Street Mission Book Roadshow programme, the children of St Paul's, Crompton had a great time filling their book bags with their favourite stories. Following the official roadshow we also invited parents and pre-school children to join us and choose some books for themselves. A wonderful way to bring families together through the joy of books.



## CBeebies Share Stories

We had a lovely surprise last month when our good friend Claire, from CBeebies Bedtime Stories, popped in to say hello. Once again, they've thrown their support behind us and Claire brought in an amazing selection of books!

# SmartStart

MANCHESTER & SALFORD

**According to the UK Poverty Report 2018, 30% of children live in poverty and reduced benefits, low pay and rising housing costs are pushing more below the threshold.**

This will be the 5th year of SmartStart, our free school uniform programme which offers families a practical support package, including school uniform, sportswear, winter coats and other accessories.

Our growing group of partners and supporters have helped us to reach 3,199 children from Manchester and Salford last year alone. Along with uniform sets we supplied over 1,100 winter coats, 578 backpacks and water bottles, 650 sportswear sets, 381 revision guides and accessories like hats, gloves and socks etc.

Our families tell us that affording everything in August is not possible (approximately £220 per child) and that without help they cut down on food, borrow, fall behind with bills or leave children in last year's uniforms. Parents get stressed and children struggle with their peers.

With help they feel less stressed, can reduce their debts and have children who "look smart" and "feel better at school".

We can't do this without everyone's help. We are looking for financial donations and donations of new and good quality school uniform and school accessories. If you can help give us a call.

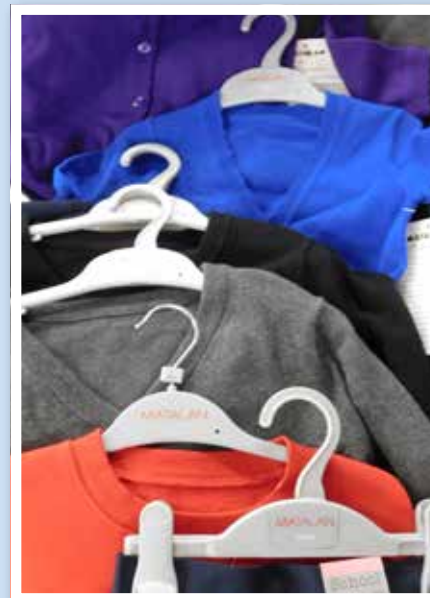
Families who received support in the past have spoken of the benefits of SmartStart which ranged from a huge boost in self-esteem to comments that their children were no longer bullied and excluded which had left them free to learn.

We couldn't possibly do what we do without the outstanding support of many local companies including David Luke. We are delighted that they will be our 2019 Uniform Partner for the 3rd year running.

David Luke not only help us by giving us incredible prices for their uniform but just as importantly they help us with their systems of online ordering, picking, packing and home delivery. Not to mention the hours of volunteering.

We must also thank Matalan who collect for us right through the summer then send us a wonderful selection. Earlier this year they sent us 38 bags of school uniform!

We are also incredibly grateful to Elaine Fox and Walkden Tesco for their support throughout the year, with trollies full of uniform donated on a regular basis.





# CHRISTMAS REFLECTIONS



Thanks to the wonderful support of so many we were able to ensure that nearly 4,000 children in Manchester and Salford had a Christmas to remember.

In the run up to Christmas, we appealed for donations of new toys and gifts as well as treats such as selection boxes and advent calendars. The presents are given new so every child is made to feel like any other when opening their presents on Christmas morning, and unwrapped so that parents and carers can come and select the gifts themselves in the run up to Christmas.

We rely greatly on support from the local community who as always, organised collections of toys and added extra items to their own shopping in the run up to Christmas. Local companies and manufacturers were fantastic with donations of presents and many showed their support including hosting company UKFast. The company put its weight behind the appeal by acting as a drop off point for donations and placing our appeal's advert on the 35 ft billboard directly outside their headquarters on Princess Parkway in Hulme.

The Appeal was rounded off in true Christmas spirit thanks once again, to The Sheridan. On 23rd December over 300 local children and families were treated to a wonderful Christmas Party in the plush surroundings of The Sheridan on Oldham Road, Manchester. The Sheridan were delighted to sponsor the event for the second year running and wanted to ensure that all guests went home with memories to last a lifetime.

Vanessa Myers, Managing Director at The Sheridan said "It was our absolute pleasure to host this event once again and we very much see it as a highlight of our year. We believe in helping the local community who are in need and we are very pleased to be able to work with Wood Street Mission and play a part in something incredibly special"

On the day, The Sheridan ensured that guests enjoyed delicious food whilst being entertained by a spectacular themed dance show, bouncy castles, face painting, magicians, balloon modelling, a

disco, photo booth and a visit with presents from the big man himself, Santa. As a generous extra touch, every family left with a bag full of Christmas food.

Yet again, The Sheridan left us completely overwhelmed by their generosity with nothing too much trouble for Vanessa and her team. The venue is superb and the professionalism of the whole team is second to none. For some of the families, it might be their only opportunity to enjoy Christmas and we're proud that we are able to play our part. We are incredibly grateful to The Sheridan for helping to make it such a special day. Every year the level of support we receive from our local community is outstanding. We are incredibly grateful to our whole community for their generosity throughout the year and especially at Christmas. In 2019 we are celebrating our 150th anniversary and although it saddens us greatly that our need is greater than ever, we are looking forward to working with our partners and community in making an even bigger impact.

# ESCAPE FROM ALCATRAZ

On 13th April Helen Tonge, MD and Executive Producer for Title Role Productions Ltd, left the UK for possibly one of the biggest challenges of her life. For us!!! Helen's challenge was so unique we wanted you to hear about it in her words...



What started as a bid to swim one escape route from Alcatraz, quickly turned into three once I started to read more about the possible destinations the escapees of the notorious prison might have got to. So, it was set. I would swim from 'The Rock' to St Francis, then to Horseshoe Bay and finally, Angel Island. San Francisco Bay is popular with swimmers now, and groups attempt swims all the time, but these prisoner routes, across three days, that was more unusual.

Swim one was exciting. The sun was shining. I could see the Golden Gate Bridge shining in the distance and despite the chill in the air, the water looked inviting. At the last minute I took the decision to swim just in a costume. No wetsuit. All my training had been in a wetsuit but if I was going to set any record with this, it had to be without. Not so bad I thought, but it is still April and not very warm! The currents pushed me out towards the golden gate and I fought against them to get to the shore of St Francis in 40 minutes. I'd swam an extra half a mile with the conditions but was pretty happy with my time.

The second swim to Horseshoe Bay was more precarious. A meeting with my coaches confirmed that the coast guard was concerned with the conditions for the next morning. 'White peaks' on the water meant it was choppy and the ebb was pushing against the flow. The next morning, we had to sail out to Alcatraz to assess. The waves were higher and the wind was up, but they decided to let me go. What a challenge! In many parts I was simply fighting against the currents and swimming into a wall of water. The helicopter coast guard flew over at some point to check I was ok! What should have taken 1-1.5 hours, took 2 hours 20! The cold really started to get me. By the time I touched my destination then got on the boat, I was shaking uncontrollably. Apparently, nobody had managed that swim in those conditions before. A small victory as I battled to stay warm. And somehow, despite all the aches, pains and dodgy elbow that had kicked in, I had to find the strength to get back in for the last swim the morning after!

Angel island – third and final destination. The route that most people believe, three prisoners took and got to. Debris and clothes were apparently found on the beach. The conditions were better. The sun was out. A cargo ship kindly changed direction for me and a hump back whale was also a visitor in the bay, further up near Richmond! At least no sharks!!! This swim felt good. I was swimming in the flood so I actually felt I was moving. Currents challenged me as I got closer to Angel but I eventually did the 2.5 mile swim in one hour 4 minutes.

What an adventure! And most importantly, a significant amount of money donated for Wood Street Mission for children to be kitted out for school. And the icing on the cake? The world open water swimming association have just confirmed that they are going to recognise the three swims as a world record to be challenged!! Thrilled to bits. Not sure about Guinness records yet. I have to submit the documents to them. But regardless, I am honoured they have been recognised officially.

Happy days



Helen, we think you are incredible and can't thank you enough for the bravery you have shown to raise money and awareness for our cause. The official World Record would be wonderful but, in our eyes, you're already a record breaker.



# FAMILY BASICS

Our Family Basics project has continued apace this year and by the end of April we had already helped 2233 children from 784 families.

Through Family Basics we provide low income families who need help with the day to day essential items that every family absolutely needs.

## These include:

- **Children's Clothing (not forgetting the teenagers of course)**
- **Bedding and Towels**
- **Toys**
- **Baby Equipment**
- **Toiletries**

Families can visit us at Wood Street in Manchester City Centre (by appointment), to pick the items they most need. Nobody knows better than them!

If you think you may need help with Family Basics, please give us a call on 0161 834 3140 or find further information on our website [www.woodstreetmission.org.uk](http://www.woodstreetmission.org.uk). Everything we do is free for families who are registered



## Do you want to help with our Family Basics project?

We are always looking for donations of clean, good quality, used and new items. All donations go directly to families who need them. Please find a list of what we are currently in need of under 'Donate Items' on our website. There is also details on how to arrange a collection or find out when you can drop off with us.



# By God, it's Books!

On 4th April we were delighted to welcome Professor Julie-Marie Strange (Professor of British History, School of Arts, Languages and Cultures at the University of Manchester) to Wood Street to present a heritage talk on the transformative powers of education. For all of us there, the evening was educational, emotional and incredibly entertaining.

A HUGE thank you to everyone who joined us on the night. It was a great evening with Julie-Marie taking us all back to the beginning when Sunday School played an important role in the lives of so many. We are really grateful to actors Mitch and Charlie, who brought everything to life and of course, we must thank Professor Julie-Marie Strange who was simply wonderful. It really hit home how important our work with literacy has been over the years and the value it has brought to so many children.



## The Remembering Nell Foundation

The Remembering Nell Foundation has supported us over the last few months with their generosity and a shared love of literacy.

Through the tragic loss of an incredibly special young life, Nell's parents and family refuse to look back in anger and only look forwards through the positive work of the Foundation. Nell had a strong passion for books and education and we are honoured that the Foundation is now an incredibly strong supporter of all of our literacy campaigns.

Nell would have been 16 this year and recently we were gifted 16 copies of 16 titles to mark her birthday. Nell's legacy truly lives on through our literacy projects. Our thoughts and thanks go to all of Nell's family.



## Catching up with old friends

It was great to catch up with old friend and colleague, Delayne Carpenter, recently.

Delayne was a former Manager at Wood Street and was a valuable member of the team from 1961 – 1988. It was great to talk through her memories which will help us fill some gaps in our archives. We had a fascinating couple of hours and we'll definitely be picking Delayne's brains again in the not too distant future.



# THANK YOU!

## Time for Thanks

We would need more of a book than a newsletter if we were to have enough space to thank everyone that has supported us over the last few months. We couldn't possibly help the thousands of families we support without your generosity and here are a few special highlights.

## A large cheque that will go a long way

The fantastic folk over at LF Europe popped in to see us recently with a whopping cheque for £5,235.30.

It was a pleasure to welcome Nick Cottrell (COO) along with Samantha, Kevin and Amer from the IT team who raised the funds, and Theresa who organises all of their support. It was great to be able to show them exactly how their money will be spent.

Over the last year, they have generously supported us in various ways including a superb donation of coats, Christmas gifts and toiletries. We are delighted to have their continued support and appreciate very much, the time and effort from everyone in the team.



## Shaky Pete brings in the funds

We are so grateful to the team over at Hawksmoor. For every 'Shaky Pete's Ginger Brew' they sell we get 50p and this past year has raised a whopping £2,784.50, taking the total raised to nearly £7,500 for us since opening. They have supported our Appeals, provided food for our Book Clubs and the team have even dressed up as our mascot Woody!



## Charity at their Core

We are delighted that Manchester-founded recruiter Core Talent has chosen us as their Charity of the Year for 2019. We took Woody in to say hello to the team and to announce their target of £2,000 and 120 items towards our Appeals!

## Children's Challenge

St Luke's C of E Primary School has been in to see us with a fantastic donation of £898.91.

The school set each class a challenge where they were given £20 for materials and they had to raise as much money as possible for Wood Street!! Each class chose to do something different including a tombola, sweet cones and one even built snowmen.

We think that all of the children have done an amazing job helping to support other children living in difficult circumstances. Thanks to everyone at St Luke's for their kindness and hard work.



## Tasty Treats for Wood Street

On Shrove Tuesday, Fazenda brought back their spectacular Dulce de Leche Pancakes for the day and all proceeds were donated to us.

Huge thanks to the team over at Fazenda and to everyone that enjoyed one of these special treats.







## Chocolate Entrepreneur

We had a very special donation this year from a very special young man. Before Christmas, Ellis (age 6) decided that he wanted to help children more unfortunate than himself. He set about making chocolates to sell at school and managed to raise over £200! We were overwhelmed that Ellis wanted to donate his funds to us and it was our pleasure to show this young entrepreneur around Wood Street.

Ellis is already thinking about what he can do next to support us and we think he's an absolute star! Thank you Ellis for working so hard to help other children and we look forward to welcoming you back very soon.

## Special Anniversary Donation in our Special Year

We were deeply honoured to have been chosen as one of the 10 charities to benefit from the Red Sea Pedestrians special 10th anniversary.

This generosity will go a long way in making a difference to our families in what is also our very special year. With 150 years of supporting children right here on our doorstep, it speaks volumes that organisations still continue to see the value in what we do and we

were proud to stand alongside some of the best North West charities. Our thanks go to all who support RSP and of course to their Trustees.



## Joined Up Fundraising

Manchester-headquartered consumer insight agency Join the Dots has raised a total of £22,000 for us through their charitable initiatives in 2018.

Over the course of 12 months, the company's employees took part in a range of individual and team fundraising activities from long distance running – including 10K and half marathon distances – to completing the National Three Peaks' Challenge, which combines the highest peaks in England, Wales and Scotland.

Closer to home, the company hosted a range of events such as regular pub quizzes, bake sales, a mini golf tournament and a book club.

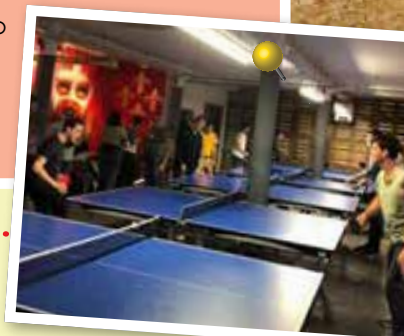
Join the Dots' in-house creative team also created a mindfulness colouring book to mark the business' 20th anniversary, featuring illustrated portraits of the staff. The Face Book was sold for £10 – every penny of which went towards the total sum raised.

## The Pounds Came Bouncing In!

We love hearing about the different fundraising ideas you all have and recently The team from OpenMoney held their first annual Table Tennis Tournament to raise funds for us!!

For every point scored they donated £1 which resulted in an impressive £1,322. Congratulations to Hannah and Tom who won the Doubles and to Will who won the Singles. Great work everyone and a bouncing thank you from all of us.

We are delighted that OpenMoney has chosen us as their Charity of the Year with plenty of exciting activities coming up. They care deeply about the challenges that our families face and we look forward to working together over the coming months.



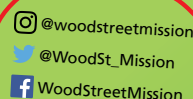
## Thank you doesn't seem enough

To everyone who has walked, run, stumbled, trotted, got wet, climbed and done all kinds of crazy activities just to raise much needed funds for us. We are so grateful and if you've been inspired to raise funds then we'd love to hear from you. Get in touch with [sophie@woodstreetmission.org.uk](mailto:sophie@woodstreetmission.org.uk) for further details on how you can help.

## Stay in touch and send us your thoughts and pics

If you're already signed up or taking part in an activity for us then we'd love to hear from you. You can send in your news and pics to [info@woodstreetmission.org.uk](mailto:info@woodstreetmission.org.uk) and we will always try to publish as many as we can.

If you love your social media as much as we do then head over to Facebook, Twitter or Instagram and get involved.





# 150

#150FORWOODSTREET

Help us celebrate our  
150th anniversary by joining our  
#150forWoodStreet campaign!



You create your own challenge – whatever you would like it to be – all we ask is that it relates to '150' in some way. The more unique and creative the better!

Remember to share your updates and events on Facebook and Twitter using #150forWoodStreet

Get sponsored to run 150 miles across 2019!

Raise £150 in sponsorship for completing the Great Manchester 10K!

Raise £150 by selling cupcakes!

Collect 150 books for our Book Appeal!

Sponsor a class to read 150 books in a term!

Get a team together and swim 150 lengths of a swimming pool!

Wood Street Mission is a children's charity supporting low income families in Manchester and Salford. We provide practical help with basic necessities like children's clothing and bedding, and projects to improve children's life chances.

## How your fundraising helps!

£20

will buy a winter coat to keep a child warm and dry

£40

will kit a child out with a new school uniform

£100

will provide a cot and bedding for a new baby.

£150

will provide 50 brand new books for one of our Book Clubs

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**Wood Street Mission is a children's charity based in the centre of Manchester. 48,000 children in Manchester and Salford are living in poverty. We help children and families by alleviating the day to day impact of poverty and improving life chances.**