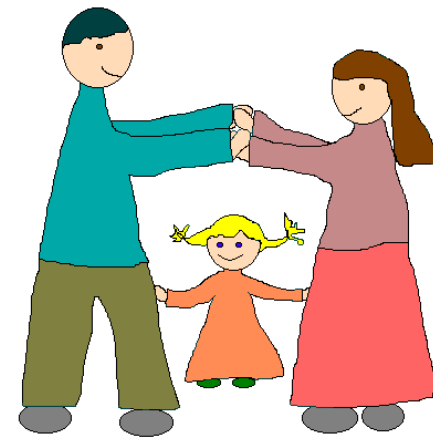


Volunteer Guide to Home-Start

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Welcome to Home-Start!



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Introduction

Introduction

I have grown to love Home-Start. Quite simply, I feel it is for me, it is about me and this is where I belong.

Why?

I think that my past and my experiences have all gained a meaning here. I have got to know people with whom I enjoy spending time, and from whom I have learned a lot.

Then I also began to realise that many people come to Home-Start with different motives, expectations and hopes. I was surprised to see how these people from different backgrounds - some young, some older; with one or more children; confident or shy, loud or reserved (the list is endless), - can work together to establish a new organisation with and by Hungarian people.

Once we just asked questions, "What is the secret of Home-Start? What keeps these different people together and what makes it work? Does it work if a person puts in considerable personal effort? And does it also work, if a person has only a few hours to spare each week?"

What helps Home-Start to establish its roots all over the world - in the UK, Africa, Australia and many other parts of Europe? What do people find attractive in this unique approach?

*First, the idea of Home-Start is very **human**.*

The fact that we become a parent and develop as a parent is a very important part of our lives. For many people parenthood is a challenge, transforming their identity, and determining their lives. And yet it is so little discussed throughout the world! However, this is what Home-Start is about, as I, you, or many others have experienced it and are still experiencing it.

*The second secret is that it is **simple**.*

Those who have already coped with children at an early age are best able to help those who have young children now. It does not need a lot of equipment, or special language. All it needs is human relationships, time and care.

*The next secret of Home-Start is that it is **professional**, while also involving ordinary citizens from the community.*

*It is a **well-structured organisation with a clear purpose**. It begins locally and offers a service by and for the local community. It builds on what the volunteer would like to contribute, on what she is able to undertake and on knowing where support is needed.*

*The fourth secret of Home-Start is **cheerfulness**.*

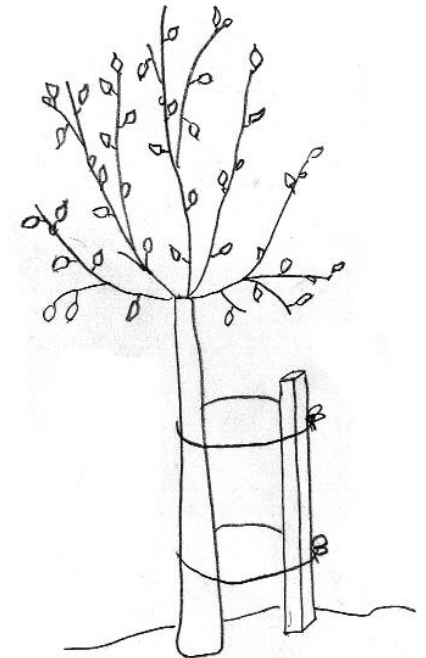
Our aim is to take great pleasure and joy into the lives of families, building on the values and good things in our own family. We ensure that cheerfulness, spontaneity and laughter permeate our visits, spreading hope and happiness to others too.

We aim that, just as for a young tree which bears its fruit with the support of a simple stake, so Home-Start should bear its fruits too. We would like to see stronger families with friends who care for each other!

We are sure you will gain great pleasure from your involvement in Home-Start, from other volunteers, from the many opportunities and above all, from helping families.

On behalf of all Home-Start colleagues:

*Magdolna Kollar
Esztergom, 2003*



Why is Home-Start needed?

Why is Home-Start needed?

"I was alone. I was alone with my children, with my problem, with my fears and questions. ...It was good that she visited me regularly. As if she were my sister."

"I love my children a lot, but sometimes they drive me crazy..."

"Unfortunately, I was unable to rely on my parents. This is why I turned to Home-Start, as I needed some help."

Do you remember how you felt when your first child was born? Was he a small baby? Did he smile at you? Or, for some unknown reason, did he cry at the top of his voice? Or later on, did he not want to eat, or did he go hysterical, or were you frightened as you stood over his cot?

And do you remember how you felt some time later, when you had become a "wise" parent with almost one year of parenting experience, when you saw new parents worrying and rushing around their first baby?.....

What does a small baby bring into the lives of a family?

Some mysterious kindness, new hopes, and, at the same time, a lot of changes, questions, worries, uncertainty, pain, resignation and restructuring. It is at such times that help is needed in the home.

Home-Start builds on the simple approach that the friendship of an experienced parent means lots of support to a family with young children, during their early years. It is especially helpful, if the volunteer presents herself with the calm, cheerfulness and patience of a more experienced parent, without imposing her own ideas. Instead, she is understanding encourages the parents with small children. The volunteer can help them to recognise the pleasures of this stage, rather than just the problems and difficulties.

It is friendship that we aim to bring into the homes of families with young children, by supporting parents in their parenting role.

Volunteers encourage and strengthen families in their own individual ways. They try to work themselves out of their job!

By volunteering, a person has the opportunity of widening their own experience, whilst at the same time improving the quality of lives in the local community. It is another aim of Home-Start, to give local people a sense of community and support in which helping others becomes a pleasant experience for them too. They invariably become stronger and more confident themselves.

Why is there a need for an organisation like Home-Start?

In 1998 Dr. Maria Kopp, dr. Csilla Csoboth and dr. Gyorgy Purebl prepared a scientific survey on what was the effect on people in Hungary, giving birth to a child or children.

The survey showed that the burden on young women giving birth to children is huge. Many of them feel tired and exhausted. This burden actually increases if there are several young children in the family.

Women are braver about giving birth to children if they feel they can rely on parents, relatives or friends when difficulties occur. Over a ten year period, the most important change is the feeling that there is much less support from relatives and neighbourhood.

"In present Hungarian society, at least statistically, having a child can mean being in a state of chronic stress and continuous physical overload. This absolutely unfair condition proves the same thing, which has already been reported by demographic and sociological surveys on health and psychology; namely that in present Hungarian society, childbirth involves parents in excessive overload. It is a basic obligation of society, particularly for its own survival (e.g. to solve the pensioner crisis too), to take over a part of- or a considerable portion of- the physical overload on parents with young children." (Maria Kopp, Csilla Csoboth, Gyorgy Purebl, "The health of young women. Changing roles 1999.)

The report of a mother The report of a mother

What did Home-Start mean to me?

"What is this service and why is it needed? How is it different from the district nurse service?"

We are all so different. There are some people who almost instinctively know everything to do with children when the first child is born. I am not one of them. I was really looking forward to my baby and I felt responsible for helping him have the best in life and encouraging his potential. The baby isn't one and a half years old yet, but already I have doubts about everything. Am I right to train him this way? Am I right to let him do this or that? How can I achieve the noble target I set myself?

Some people have a friend or godmother who visits the child often and supports the mother through her uncertainties. But I had no-one.

Our problem was relatively trivial. The baby wouldn't eat well, pushing away the spoon and only playing with his food with his hands. This lasted for more than two months.

Then our Home-Start volunteer came. First she asked me all about his feeding habits; then she talked and played with the child and fed him. This was how she got to know him.

She came several times, played with him and fed him.

Earlier I had received various advice from outside, but nobody actually tried out their well-established methods on my son. I can't say that my volunteer caused him to become a good eater immediately, but together with my help, we tried to find ways of encouraging my little boy to sit down while he was eating. I would be telling a lie, if I said he no longer throws things around at mealtimes, but it is I who reacts differently now.

There are always different angles to a problem and there is never a single solution either!

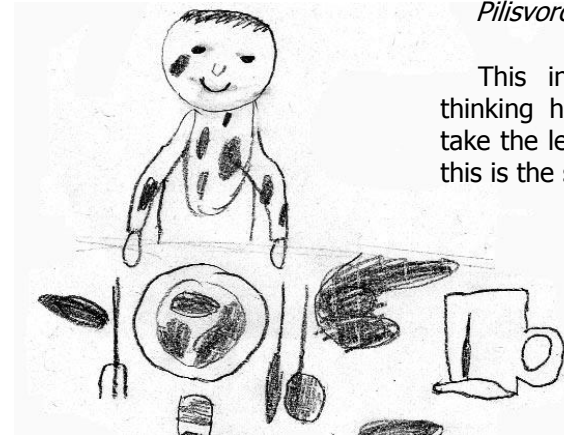
Home-Start is good because:

A child's behaviour is more genuine at home than in an external environment.

There are some things that are only spectacular at home and therefore it is necessary to find the cure at home.

I would like to thank the volunteer for supporting me. Her help made me stronger, and I know that I can turn to her with trust at any time."

Pilisvorosvar. 2002



This insecure mother's way of thinking had to change, for her to take the lead with her child, because this is the secret of success.

Why do families with young children request the help of a Home-Start volunteer?

Just a few examples:

- there are several young children (e.g. twins) in the family
- they just had the birth of their first baby
- they recently moved to the area
- they have no relatives nearby who could help
- they struggle with a long-term illness
- they feel lonely and isolated
- they feel exhausted
- they feel helpless and unsure of themselves
- they feel they are making mistakes in bringing up their child(ren)

Structure of Home-Start Structure of Home-Start

Volunteer and organiser's responsibilities

We offer families with small children, the regular visits of a Home-Start volunteer, in their home, where their difficulties exist, for a few hours each week. (e.g. every Tuesday from 10 am to 12pm). They can rely on the volunteer coming at the agreed time; that she will be available regularly for those few hours and will be open to listening to the family. The Home-Start approach is based on a personal relationship with the people involved. It is based on friendship. The volunteer and family members can get to know each other well and the family no longer feels they are alone.



Through the care provided by the volunteer, Home-Start usually succeeds in helping families.

Through the care provided by the volunteer, Home-Start usually succeeds in helping families.

Everything else in Home-Start (the organiser, course of preparation, organising it locally, case discussions) has been developed to offer live and personal support for the volunteers. Because Home-Start visiting is not always easy, it is the organiser's responsibility to create an open and understanding environment, from which volunteers can bravely and safely support families.

What support structure is provided by Home-Start for the volunteers?

<i>At the beginning</i>	<i>joint preparation for providing Home-Start support</i>
<i>Professional background</i>	<i>in case you have questions</i>
<i>Information</i>	<i>about local resources</i>
<i>Support</i>	<i>if you need help with anything</i>
<i>Safety</i>	<i>that the problems and time commitment will not be too big to cope with</i>
<i>Reality</i>	<i>because there are outsiders who will review your work</i>
<i>Optimism</i>	<i>in order to take pleasure from helping</i>
<i>Resources</i>	<i>in case you become too tired</i>
<i>Community</i>	<i>that can be a supportive network</i>
<i>Valve</i>	<i>in case you need to let off steam</i>
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>which is no greater than you can take</i>
<i>Exit</i>	<i>when the visiting has to end</i>

Who can become a volunteer?

Who can become a volunteer?

Home-Start volunteers are also parents. Their work does not require any qualifications, but it is important that they are open to others' problems and pleasures, they are able to keep a secret and approach families with cheerfulness and understanding. They must be willing to undertake responsibility for their Home-Start work.

Each volunteer completes a 40-hour course of preparation before being introduced to a family. Most courses are organised once a week, and they last for 10 –12 weeks.

Before they begin to work with Home-Start, volunteers are requested to provide a certificate, showing that they have no criminal record. The cost of this is covered by the Foundation.

Responsibilities of a volunteer during family visits:

- Visit regularly in their own home, one or two families to whom they have been matched.
- Spending at least two hours with each family at least once a week
- Offering emotional support and practical help to the family
- Trying to introduce cheerfulness in the lives of the family members, through sharing their friendship and experience.
- Treating all information about the family confidentially
- Filling in the required, simple monthly report and presenting it to the organiser on time.

The volunteers try to help a family in such a way that the parents gain confidence and independence to continue without Home-Start support.

Often it is not easy to end a close relationship, but the organiser and other volunteers can help. Very often it is only by visiting a new family, that the volunteer accepts the previous closure. So often a volunteer is left realising how more and more families can benefit from her involvement.

If the life of a volunteer changes, so that she is no longer able to assist families, we are still happy for her to keep in touch with us. If she is willing and she has time, she may wish to undertake other responsibilities within the organisation.

The organiser

The organiser

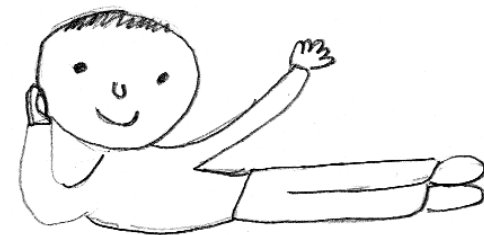
The organiser of the local Home-Start is a person who is a parent too, who has undertaken the 140-hour course of the Home-Start Foundation and has successfully passed an exam.

The most important responsibility of the organiser is to support the volunteers and to keep in contact with the families who request help.

He/She is responsible for ensuring that the local scheme maintains the ethos, structure, standards and methods of practice of Home-Start.

He/she is in charge of organising the local scheme – recruiting volunteers, organising courses of preparation and on-going training, maintaining contact (direct or indirect) with the families, administration, writing applications and raising the necessary funds to sustain the scheme, seeking sponsorship, organising events in the community, and remaining open to any creative opportunities for the local organisation.

The organiser is also responsible for maintaining external links: with other relevant local organisations, local government, the media and the National Foundation of Home-Start.



One organiser wrote:

"Up to now, I have lived at home with my children. Over the years I have come to recognise what a treasure I have in my own family - all the pleasures, pains and experiences of motherhood. I am trying now, to pass on the awareness of this treasure to others – to love people in the same way that I have learned, through my children, to understand, accept, help and love them at home."

How does Home-Start help?

How does Home-Start help?

If someone applies to be a Home-Start volunteer, the local organiser visits her. They discuss why she would like to become a volunteer and the organiser briefly describes the Home-Start approach. In order to become a volunteer, she has to attend the 40-hour course of preparation, before beginning to help a family.

Most families are put in touch with Home-Start by the district nurse, a paediatrician or on the recommendation of an acquaintance. It is important that the family itself chooses to accept the service. We can't just ring anybody's door bell, saying we have been sent because the family needs help!

Once a family has accepted the offer of Home-Start, they will be visited by the organiser. Together they discuss the needs of the family and what they can expect from Home-Start. If there is mutual agreement, then visits can begin. First the organiser discusses the needs of the family with a prepared volunteer, before introducing her. After that, the volunteer can visit the family each week.

The organiser also maintains contact with the family. From time to time, the organiser will visit them to find out how they feel about the relationship with their volunteer.

Once a month the volunteers meet for support and supervision. During these meetings, everyone can share their experiences with each other about the family visits. They can discuss the pleasures, problems or any questions they may have. Confidentiality is always respected. We do not wish to discuss the families' problems, but rather to talk about relationships between volunteer and family.

The regular meetings and on-going training opportunities, help us to find new and sometimes unique solutions in specific situations, and to find pleasure in helping.

In addition, the organiser can also be contacted if a volunteer has a problem or specific question, or simply would like to discuss a situation privately.

After a while, help to the family ends. The organiser is also responsible for helping to end the relationship, by paying a final visit to the family.

What does Home-Start require from volunteers?

What does Home-Start require from volunteers?

Agreement	<i>with the basic principles</i>
Commitment	<i>to Home-Start and to the families</i>
Reliability	<i>to be reliable about the times she visits families, who expect her and rely on her</i>
Responsibility	<i>to understand her role and position in the lives of families</i>
Confidentiality	<i>all information about families must be treated confidentially</i>
Fairness	<i>in all activities related to the work with Home-Start</i>
Respect	<i>for the families visited, even if their values and lifestyle are different from her own</i>
Maintaining contact	<i>with the organiser: to indicate if she needs help or feels that she has undertaken too big a burden</i>
Records	<i>to keep monthly reports and to hand them to the organiser on time</i>

What does Home-Start offer to volunteers?

Opportunity	<i>to use her experience to help others</i>
Recognition	<i>of her values</i>
Training	<i>through a course of preparation and on-going training</i>
Individual support	<i>and regular personal supervision with the organiser</i>
Group support	<i>in the form of regular meetings with other volunteers</i>
Reimbursement of costs	<i>which are eligible expenses if required (telephone and travel costs required to maintain the relationships with the families)</i>

What support is given to the volunteer?

What support is given to the volunteer?

1. What help is given by the organiser?

- Introduction to the family
- Regular monthly questions – how do you feel about the family?
- Experience
- Information about when the family requires help
- Looking at relationships from outside
- Help in case, for whatever reason, you have to stop visiting a family
- Support with ending family visits

If you are concerned about anything, if you are uncertain or have questions, or your personal circumstances have changed, or you find helping a family is too much for you, then talk to the organiser as soon as possible, because help is always available for you too!

2. How can other volunteers help you?

- It is important for them how you feel
- They listen to you
- They can share their experiences with you
- They can offer ideas

Most probably you can also help them! Always rely on each other's support and encouragement!

3. Meetings (support and supervision)

Supervision sessions are organised in order to provide the most professional help possible. In Home-Start, helping families is not just up to the individual volunteer. Rather, each volunteer is well-supported herself by the organiser and other volunteers.

During regular meetings, successes and difficulties are discussed, as well as the volunteer's relationship with a family (always respecting their confidentiality.) These are ideal occasions for general conversation and for supporting each other too.

4. On-going training

If volunteers request it, the organiser can arrange further training for them. Experts can be invited, institutions visited, or certain subjects can be covered in more detail (e.g. the nature of Home-Start help, child development, or having a disabled child in the family.)

What volunteers wrote after the course of preparation:

I came to the course of preparation, because I wanted to help others and to use my free time effectively. I believe that the voluntary ethic moves the world forward. I wanted to make my own contribution.

I came here because I know that I could have done with Home-Start myself!

It was good that everyone was open and sincere with me, in an uninhibited way. In this atmosphere people were able to express their innermost selves.

The course helped me to understand how other people are 'different' and how to listen to them and hear the opinions and ideas of others.

Before the course, I hadn't even considered the severe problems faced by young people of today.

It was important for me to understand what I had undertaken. The many examples and talks have shown me what this kind of work entails.

It was good to get to know each other. I am looking forward now to meeting the families and to the supervision sessions.

I have met really understanding and good people. We formed a close team. It is really great to belong to this team.

I realise that I am not alone. There are many other similar people who really want to contribute something!

The course of preparation

The course of preparation

This leaflet is no substitute for the course of preparation. Only those who attend the course regularly can become volunteers for Home-Start. The course provides the opportunity to learn important aspects of the Home-Start approach through practical exercises. This is why it is so important not to miss a single session!

The course of preparation has three objectives:

First it **provides information** on everything that you might need in the course of your voluntary work. E.g.:

- principles and practice of Home-Start
- practical aspects of Home-Start
- role of the volunteer
- role of the organiser
- local networking
- child protection

The second objective is to **develop** existing **skills** by recognising and honing them to best help families. E.g.:

- listening and communication skills
- confidentiality
- parental skills

The third objective is to **create a community**. It is difficult to provide help in isolation. Community support provides the back-up. The course provides the opportunity:

- to get to know other volunteers
- to develop a relationship with the organiser
- to share the pleasures gained in Home-Start
- to share the difficulties that occur in the course of the voluntary work

During the course, you will be able to talk about your own experience of being a parent. Everyone has the opportunity to share as much or as little as they wish.

Throughout the course, volunteers have the opportunity to reconsider their own commitment to this voluntary work, and whether they can take on regular visits to one or to two families.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality



We are in a very special position when a family allows us to be with them at home. We learn more and more about their life. Often they trust us with their most personal problems.

Respect their confidentiality! Any family that feels their trust has been betrayed, can feel painfully disappointed.

All information about parents and families must be treated confidentially!

One of the important roles of the organiser is that a volunteer can share everything with her/him that cannot be shared with anyone else. You need never feel isolated if you feel pressured or concerned. Never hesitate to share your burden with the organiser.

The rule of confidentiality might sound simple, as it can be encapsulated in just one or two sentences. However, it is not always so easy to put it into practice. We shall discuss it many times and also we want to stress it at the very beginning.

Home-Start: - its English roots

Home-Start: - its English roots

Home-Start began in Leicester, England, in 1973. The founder, Margaret Harrison, had already been helping young families with young children based on her own experience of being a parent, by visiting them regularly in their homes.

This spontaneous initiative has now spread nation-wide.

In 2000, there were around 300 locally based Home-Start schemes throughout the UK, with more than 7,000 volunteers. During that year they supported 18,000 families with 43,000 children.

As more and more other countries became interested in the Home-Start approach, in 1999 the sister organisation 'Home-Start International' was founded.

The aim of Home-Start International is to spread and share the idea all over the world. There are basic principles which can ensure that wherever Home-Start has been adopted and adapted, the basic ethos and standards are retained. It does so by providing professional information, guidance, and personal contacts. Co-operation between countries practising the Home-Start approach can increase their co-operation with each other.

Key principles of Home-Start:

- helping families with young children
- it is a free service
- volunteers are all well prepared
- volunteers are also parents
- parents are helped to strengthen their own parenting role
- home-visiting
- tolerance
- confidentiality
- cheerfulness

In Hungary

In Hungary

Home-Start Hungary and its activities to 2003

The birth of a new organisation is always exciting. There is a point when, after the initial talking and planning, one reaches a point when the organisation comes into existence and starts its own activities.

I have often tried to ask about the initial experiences of other organisations. What happened? How does a committed group of people turn their good intentions into a competent, developing association? What is the secret of success? Is it the legal framework, or an excellent leader, or a burning passion, or is it having enough money or good relationships? What caused the birth of Home-Start in Hungary in 2000. How did it happen?

The Home-Start movement was not unknown in Hungary. Within the framework of the Family Therapy Association, there were several attempts to develop this service throughout Hungary too.

Then, in 1992, the National Association of Large Families (known as NOE in Hungary) learnt about Home-Start. NOE managers very much liked its principles as practised in the UK. In 1994, they invited the founder of Home-Start, Margaret Harrison, to Hungary, to their conference at Godollo University.

In 2000, NOE began to set up the organisation in Hungary. They decided to create a nation-wide network by creating a team of organisers, with members co-operating with each other for mutual support, recruiting volunteers and simultaneously setting up local Home-Start schemes in several locations.

Experts also supported this idea, including members of SOTE, The Institute of Behavioural Sciences. The Home-Start organiser training materials were put together under their guidance and they also agreed to train the organisers.

Home-Start International provided professional materials, which were translated into Hungarian and adapted for the Hungarian culture.

The greatest difficulty was raising the necessary funding. In order to overcome this problem, Home-Start turned to the Ministry of Social and Family Affairs, requesting its support in spreading the service within its

framework of preventive programmes. They managed to spark the interest of Ministry officials and the first group of organisers began their training in 2001, with the support of the Ministry.

In the meantime, NOE established the Home-Start Foundation, which was registered in June 2001.

This was our position in 2001:

- We had our own office
- As a result of support from the Ministry of Social and Family Affairs, we had enough funding for approximately 12 months.
- We had 13 trained organisers
- Professionally produced materials in Hungarian assisted our work
- The Foundation was registered
- We had established good relationships with important experts.
- We appeared in the national media on several occasions

Organisers had regular meetings every two months (and they still meet regularly). The first Home-Start leaflets and posters were also created by this initial team, who also used their meetings to discuss some problems, questions and the pleasures of running their local schemes. We also co-operated with each other in compiling funding applications.

In the autumn of 2001 local Home-Start schemes began. The trained organisers started to recruit the first volunteers from within their own localities, to make families aware of Home-Start, to promote Home-Start in an acceptable way, to establish relationships with local experts, and to look for supporters. Many agreements were signed to co-operate with institutions of social care. The first courses of preparation began for volunteers.

On 12 February 2002, the first trained volunteer started to visit a family in Esztergom!

Over the next two years, a further **27** organisers received their certificates. Family visits started in 13 towns.

In 2002, organisers spent **5000 voluntary hours** developing the Home-Start service.

In 2003 nearly **200 volunteers** worked for Home-Start.

In 2003 the **first local foundations** were registered.

In May 2003 the first national conference was held. All volunteers, organisers and supporters were invited to this conference, accompanied by their families. The day was spent in joint celebration, with a small feast, discussions and games for the children. The volunteers who met from all over the country, talked with each other about what helping families meant to them, sharing their pleasures and problems with each other. It was so good to meet each other from within Home-Start in Hungary and we found we all wanted to achieve the same things. It was so good to recognise that all the efforts and sacrifices involved, had led to the creation of such a strong and vibrant organisation. We also recognised that Home-Start wasn't just about a few people with good intentions, but that it had already become a nation-wide organisation.

...

Now that I have collected and listed everything above, it appears to be a wonderful success story. I cannot deny that there is much pleasure (and pride) in what we have achieved so far, and that the activities themselves have tangible results. But! They are only milestones. I am happy to talk about what happened in-between the milestones too – the everyday struggles, disappointments and hopes.

When we as organisers returned home after the joint course of preparation and the celebration of receiving our certificates, we had to cope with the difficulty of being alone in our own locality and town. We kept returning to the organisers' group every two months, but we knew we had to find our own solutions within our local communities. Finding volunteers, contacting experts, the local media and local government and identifying families – each was a different hurdle. And just as in other areas of one's life, we met with very different types of people. Some were enthusiastic; others rejected us. Some encouraged us; others ignored us. Others just sat on the fence and waited!

The greatest encouragement came from volunteers. They were the first few people who trusted us and were prepared to undertake the tasks. With them we could talk and share our thoughts. It was they who helped us to build Home-Start locally.

Another factor which added to our difficulties, was that voluntary work and voluntary organisations were only just beginning (and still are) to develop in Hungary. A lot of people have doubts about voluntary work. In the UK voluntarism is a huge tradition. In Hungary, unfortunately, it is not so. There are very few people willing to undertake such work.

A lot of effort went into making families aware of our activities, to earn their trust and to make them realise that they might need our involvement.

Providing help was not always easy either. We found families who required much more than we could provide. We sometimes felt that all we could offer was to support them once or twice a week during a difficult period in their lives. A volunteer offers her time, patience and care to families.

In what ways have *we* changed?

In a lot of ways!

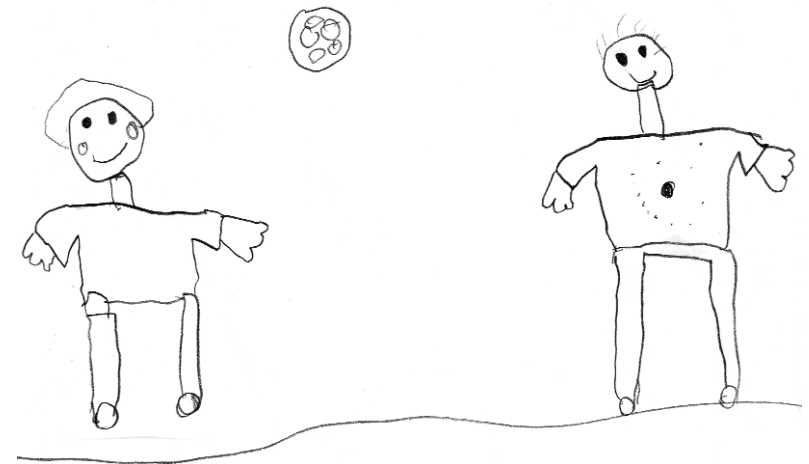
We have learned how to help people, whilst at the same time respecting their freedom to make their own choices and decisions. We have developed ways of carrying the burdens of others without becoming paralysed ourselves. We have gained insights into ourselves, with each other, as well as with our own children.

The lives of families, children and adults have opened up to us. Each volunteer has brought something new to Home-Start – the diversity each has experienced and is still experiencing in their own lives as parents, and what can be shared – creating an organisation which is truly rich in human resources.

Home-Start is a big adventure. It has been a pleasure establishing it, and it continues to be a pleasure working together as a team.

"the systemic change, especially at the beginning of the 1990's, had a very negative effect on the personal relations of people: the majority of people have limited their relations."

"In the new Millennium, we have a dual task: to protect and keep family relations, and to strengthen "civilian society" surrounding the individuals on the basis of trust and solidarity, which is a basic requirement not only for the well-being of individuals, but also an efficient economy." (Fruzsina Albert – Beáta Dávid: Human relations in Hungary in the last decade of the 20th century)



Alphabet speech for volunteers

Alphabet speech for volunteers

What does Home-Start provide?

- A. *Affirmation*
Amazement – We affirm with amazement how so many families cope in the most daunting circumstances.
- B. *Being with rather than doing to*
Behaviour "Behaviour can be seen; experience cannot." Ronald Laing. We have a responsibility to make each other's experience of life as rewarding and positive as possible.
- C. *Care/Confidentiality/Celebration/Co-operation*
- D. *Development of self and others*
- E. *Energy – We can help turn apathy to energy*
Encouragement – encouraging parents' strengths and emotional wellbeing and encouraging families to widen their network of relationships and resources
Earth – Home-Start grows organically, from the very roots of a community. Anagram Home-Start/Most Earth.
Emotion – We give emotional support.
Enthusiasm – has the most amazing power to spread.
- F. *Friendship/Fun/Flexibility to take account of different needs.*
Food - never underestimate the value of eating or cooking together.
- G. *Generosity – of spirit and of sharing oneself. E.g. the parent who was living in extremely poor circumstances, and under severe stress herself, who sorted out clothes "for poor kiddies".*
- H. *Happiness/Home/Hope – "Hooray, Here Comes Tuesday!" "Out of happiness" wrote Vaclav Havel, "all good affections grow". This is a challenging thought in a world where the remedy for ills is so often punishment.*
Heart – at the heart of Home-Start. Anagram Home-Start/Most Heart
- I. *Information – provide it or seek it for a family as necessary.*
- J. *Joy – spread it.*
Judgement – we say we are non-judgemental, but in practice, we make positive judgements all the time with and on behalf of a family.
- K. *Kindness – is composed of thoughtfulness, gentleness, tolerance and respect the dignity of others. E.g. remembering the birthday or providing a bunch of daffodils in a vase, because the likelihood is there may not be one.*
- L. *Love – Quite simply, if it is genuine, it can change the world.*
Laughter – really is the best medicine.
- M. *Mothering – According to Anna Dally, mothers are natural therapists. 'At Mother's' is another anagram of Home-Start.*
Men – There are many involved, either as sons, husbands, partners of the female volunteers, or as part of a male/female partnership visiting a family together, or as male Home-Start volunteers.
Sometimes it is hard to place them with a family who might prefer a mother-figure.
- N. *Need to be needed – We all do, don't we?*
- O. *Offer – we have no authority to do anything but 'offer' as volunteers in Home-Start.*
- P. *Power of powerlessness*
Practical help
Person, rather than problem-oriented.
- Q. *Quality – to which we all aspire.*
- R. *Rights – The right of every child to have a supported parent.*
Relationship/Respect/Reciprocity/Reassurance – reassuring parents that difficulties in bringing up children are not unusual.
- S. *Support/Start/Simple/Spontaneous/Self-esteem*
Smile – the power of a smile. I am sad that so often for a volunteer to deliver a smile into the home, it has to be backed up with a scheme with 'Service Level Agreement' back at the office.
- T. *Time – to be there, to listen and to care*
Touch – Physically and emotionally.
Trust – not truss.
Truth – Vaclav Havel said "Truth and love must triumph over lies and hatred."
- U. *Us/Understanding/Um el Fahm – the Arab community in Israel where Home-Start exists.*
- V. *Volunteering – Volunteers are not conscripted – volunteering engenders choice.*
Value/Valued/Valuable.

- W. Work – at its best, is love made visible – we work at a marriage, work in Home-Start, work bringing up the children.
- X. X-Ray Art – i.e. the Aboriginal cave paintings, where there is the skeleton of a fish, for children to learn the structure, before putting on the variations of flesh, size, colour – like our basic structure with the variations of each Home-Start scheme.
- Y. You – Thank You!
- Z. ZZZZZ – Falling asleep.

Margaret Harrison



*"be simple as a road,
to lead to everyone,*

*be good as air,
to embrace everyone,*

*be sweet as bread,
to feed everyone,*

*be cheerful as wine,
to entertain everyone."*

(László Mécs)

Home-Start is a voluntary organisation committed to promoting the welfare of families with at least one child under five years of age. Volunteers offer regular support, friendship and practical help to families under stress in their own homes, helping to prevent family crisis and breakdown.