

TALKING POINT: Robert Thomas, Lead Executive Officer of Herefordshire Vennture



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IN 1856 John Venn – vicar of St. Peters, wanted to stop hope vanishing from children’s lives when their families slid into ever-deeper troubles.

His idea was simple: help families to help themselves. He began equipping people to visit struggling families in their homes and his idea is still changing children’s lives today.

A Vennture volunteer shared recently, “I never thought that giving a mum or dad an hour a week could change their life.” The changes are not trivial. The impact is beyond words.

Mum reading her seven-year-old a bedtime story for the first time. A dad - stuck in prison’s revolving door, getting his first job interview. A teenager kept out of the criminal justice system and children kept out of care. A mum brought back from the brink of ending it all. Helping families to help themselves is no quick fix.

Building trust demands a consistent, yearlong, week-in week-out time commitment. Hearing what is truly important to mum or dad requires feeling. Sticking with mum or dad through thick and thin and always cheering each tiny step that they take is hard. Growing dad or mum’s strength to cope is a challenge. Giving someone a voice in a system that she or he can feel is against them demands wisdom. Highs and lows can seem unending.

Showing genuine love is an emotional roller coaster. Learning not to judge, grasping life is tougher for others than you ever imagined and facing your own failings honestly are unavoidable. Forgiving over and over and over and over again is never easy. Yet - as John Venn found, giving meaning to The Power of Jesus Love really works.

100 years from now, will it matter what car you drove or house you lived in? It will matter that you were important in the life of a child. Could you help us change a child’s life for the better?