



close duffield foundation



Changing  
Our Lives

# Poets First

A collection of writing by young poets





clough duffield foundation

Changing Our Lives  
22 - 24 Hagley Mews  
Hall Drive  
Hagley  
West Midlands  
DY9 9LQ

Tel: 0300 302 0770  
Email: [ask@changingourlives.org](mailto:ask@changingourlives.org)  
Web: [www.changingourlives.org](http://www.changingourlives.org)

# Contents

<b>My Child</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Verbal Violence</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>A Life as a Melody</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>I'm from Poland You're from England</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Life in Care</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Emotional Journey</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Persian Memories</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Warzone</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Racism</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Lifeless</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Love in Life</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Friendship</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Aspirations</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Mi Com a England 2012</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Champ Football</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>I'm the Captain</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Miles of Style</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Love Starts with a Kiss</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>What Makes Me Sad</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>We Have a Voice</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>My Rock Poem</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Changing Lives</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>See Me</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Passion</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Active</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Signing</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Helpful</b>	<b>36</b>



# Poets First

Changing Our Lives is a rights based organisation that works in co-production with people with disabilities of all ages to achieve equality, good health and social inclusion. 'Changing Young Lives' is a branch of Changing Our Lives, which works with children and young people with disabilities aged 8-25.

Clore Duffield fund poetry and literature initiatives for children and young people, under the age of 19, across the UK. The Clore Duffield Foundation has created these awards with the aim of providing children and young people with opportunities to experience poetry and literature in exciting and compelling ways, in and out of school.

In 2013 Changing Our Lives were one of fifteen organisations across the UK to receive a Clore Duffield Poetry and Literature Award to fund a project called 'Poets First'. Changing Our Lives use a variety of multi-media and creative means to engage young people, but wanted to gain more experience of using creative writing as a means of self-expression.

We held poetry workshops for young people with disabilities in secondary schools across Sandwell and Wolverhampton. The workshops were facilitated by Birmingham's Poet Laureate; Dreadlock Alien, who captivated each and every audience with the power of spoken word. Every young



person took a subject that was personal to them to develop their own thoughts and experiences and translate this into poetry. Young people with disabilities should be seen as “people first”; and this unmistakable reality is evident by the subject areas that the young people wrote about.

They adopted poetry to use as a vehicle for self-advocacy, raising issues such as; acceptance, bullying, racism, teenage pregnancy, education and depression. The thoughts, experiences and expectations of these young people are no different to those of any other young person. The whole process enabled each and every young person to have a powerful voice and the right to be heard.

Each workshop ended in a ‘poetry slam’, where the young people performed to their peers and a winner was selected by the young poets. The winner’s poems are among many others included in this book, but due to the personal content of the poetry and personal circumstances of some of the young people, we have not published all their names.

All of the young people with disabilities that took part in Poets First were aged 11 – 18, spanning a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. Many of these young poets have profound and multiple learning disabilities and behaviour that has been labeled as ‘challenging’.

The young people independently wrote most of the poetry, but where young people had more profound disabilities, these pieces were written with the support of Dreadlock Alien.

A photograph showing a man with dark dreadlocks and a beard, wearing a dark jacket, looking down. To his right is a young boy with dark hair, wearing a white school polo shirt with a crest, also looking down. A teal text box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

## **Dreadlock Alien**

I was honoured to work alongside the Changing Our Lives team on the arts outreach programme into schools. We arrived at each session armed with blank paper, pens and visitors badges and left each one with poems, smiles and memories. Beatbox echoed and raps were performed with confidence, gestures, props and sound effects. The work produced included poems from expecting mums to unborn children, rhymes about football teams, verses about video games and love poems that made teachers blush, cringe or swoon.



The idea was to have fun whilst engaging in art for social change, a morning to remember with a non traditional teaching team. Each school hosted us well, all teachers supported and empowered the young persons most of whom we had never met before the workshops. Well done Sandwell and Wolverhampton schools.

### **Methodology**

- First be good at saying poems and engaging audiences.
- Treat every writer as special with a unique view on things.
- Find what they want to write about and gather words on paper. Then describe the words, then rhyme with them.
- A couplet ladder on the right hand side of the page then acts as a framework for the writing.
- We then go from page to stage breathing expression, tone and gesture in the work.
- We then showcase what we have done X Factor style at the end of the lesson.

Spoken word and performance poetry are important vessels for confidence building, group working, writing skills, communication and the empowering of the writer themselves. Often unheard and fragile voices in our society can use poetry and rap to articulate their feelings and ideas.

**Dreadlock Alien - Richard Grant**



# My Child



This is my valentine poem for you my child  
Even though it's been so hard  
leaving me with all these scars  
But my love for you will be above the stars

I just hope when you grow up you will be able to cope  
you've changed my life for the best  
and we will have a long time left


I can't wait till were finally together  
My heart will melt but this feeling will last forever

Even though your nappy will linger  
I can't wait for you to wrap your hand around my finger

When you're here I will sob  
But being a mum will be the best job

You've changed my life like a shot from a rifle  
Your kicks can be painful but I'm so thankful

Hearing your first cry will just make me die  
I'm writing this so you will understand  
that my love for you will never fade



As I've paid a lot for this game  
My dreams for you are big and bright and  
I hope you achieve your highest  
Like as high as a kite  
Even though it has been a bumpy ride  
I shall push you in your pram with a lot of pride

Yes I'm young but I shall stand up proud and tall  
I've been blessed with this beautiful gift  
For them nine months I have gave you a lift

The bond we have got is like we are married  
After all these nine months I have carried

We have got so many years together and  
many more tears to share  
I can't wait for your birth for you to  
finally to be here on earth

I always feel constantly glum  
But I am so happy  
To finally be your mom

I hope you're comfy there inside as I'm walking  
We have stopped smoking you're not choking  
My lovely baby we shall soon meet  
Mummy loves you so get some sleep

**Written by**  
**Molly Anne Eccles**

# Verbal Violence

I am going to write a verbal violence  
All the anger and abuse  
I just can't sit in silence

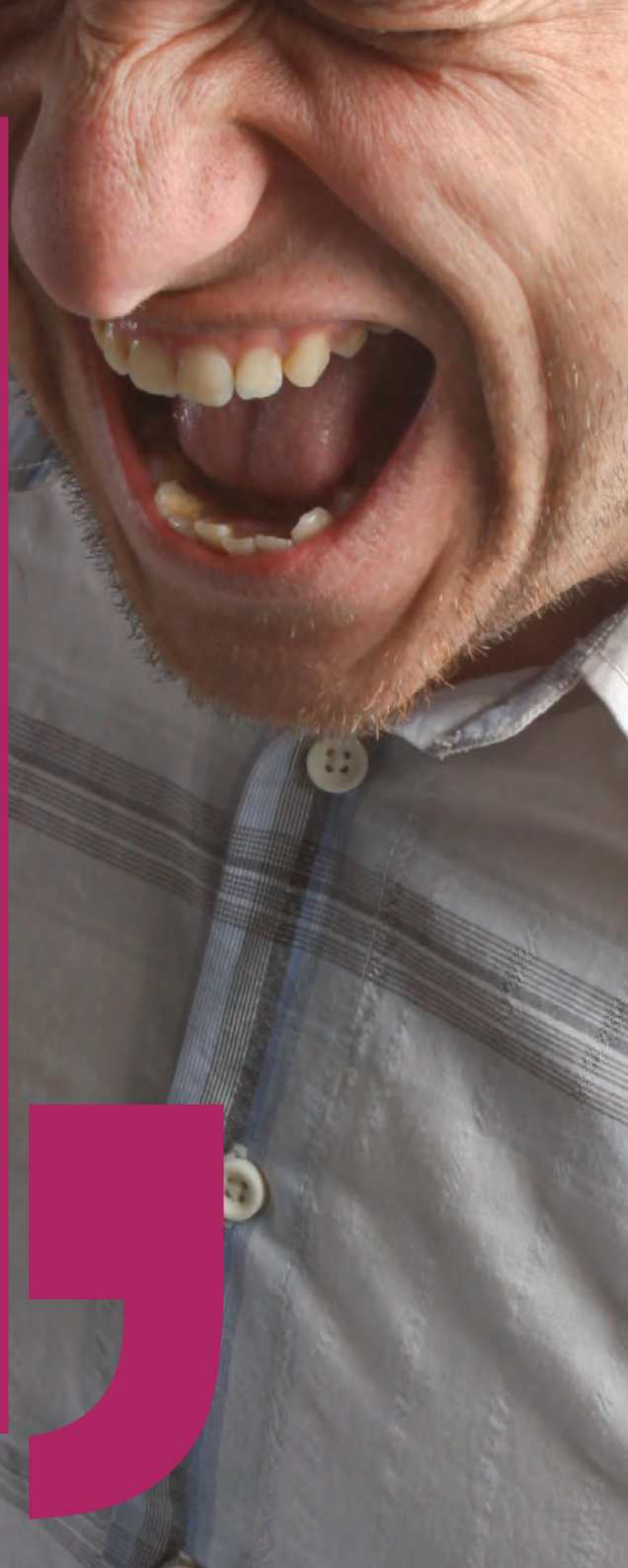
Running so fast I need to slow down  
catch my breath  
cuz if I don't think this could be my death

Need to man up be strong and brave  
Cuz the next thing you know  
I could end up in my grave

Me and my brother must protect my mother

So I need to stop the riot until it goes quiet

**Written by**  
**Sabrina Aslam**





# A Life as a Melody

Life is a melody  
It can't get worse  
Music a remedy  
Sing the next verse

A life as a melody is like hitting high notes  
Come listen to my music can I have your votes  
Or even beat boxing on my everyday street  
All this beautiful music just knocks me off my feet

I love to have music ringing in my ear  
It makes me chill out and gets rid of my fears  
Life is a melody full of beautiful cords  
Life is a melody an orchestra of awards

I love shows like X Factor and The Voice  
Put me on the panel  
I'll make an easy choice

Life is a melody  
It can't get worse  
Music a remedy  
Sing the next verse



# I'm from Poland You're from England

I say dziendobry, you say hello  
I say nie, you say no  
I say funt, you say pound  
I say nic, you say found  
I say kwadrat, you say square  
I say wlos, you say hair  
I say makaron, you say pasta  
I say kasta, you say rasta

Thousands of miles apart  
But Polish comes from my heart



# Life in Care

Life in care is a family with no ties  
Life in care they're telling me lies  
Sadness and loss is all blown away  
Life gets better and better every single day  
New brother and sister introduced into my life

A new mom and dad  
they're a loving husband and wife  
Before my new family I struggled to communicate  
Bouncing around years since I was only eight

My second family I had was bossy and kind  
But I had my adoptive parents  
their love made me blind  
Life in care is not always bad  
If you think it is then you're just sad





# Emotional Journey

I came out of Handsworth and I saw sad  
He was confused cos he lost his dad  
He thought he could never find a smile

All the bad made his life a constant trail  
He was brave he never cried  
Then I saw the snakes that lied

I used to see him always mad  
Sometimes I see a small smile it makes me glad

Life is a journey crossing mountains and oceans  
The ups and downs of a journey of emotion

# Persian Memories

I remember watching the beautiful Persian rivers flow  
I think it was about seven years ago  
I remember drinking from the glistening tiled fountain  
Looking up at the beautiful mountain

Islamic threads through the rusty red rug of my belief  
Wolverhampton on the outside but Persian underneath  
I remember the time when my neighbour was Iran  
When I was nestled in a village called Thran

I remember the time when sallom was hello  
Now I live in a land that has snow  
Memories that wrapped me up warm like cotton  
Like fading photos I hope not forgotten



# Warzone

Eight o'clock at night and I'm sitting in a World War 2 tank  
Fighting all round me my minds gone blank

When I got on the battlefield the guns went boom  
Bullets showered through the sky zoom zoom zoom

I look up in the sky boom there's a rocket  
I look down at my gun and lock it

I look at my XBOX textbox  
It's full my skills are perfection

I play on my XBOX and call of duty  
I take a shot it's a beauty

I look on the battlefield boys with guns  
I think of all the mums who will lose their sons

I get my AK-47  
And blast them all to heaven

10 of us together under one clan tag  
Gonna put our enemies in a body bag



# Racism

I can touch racism it feels like Gillette sharp razor with blue cold ice and table salt, bullets hit your fingers like a blunt nail pulled off dipped in lemon and green lime and red chilli powder, rough sand paper scraping skin and bone.

I can hear racism, I listen to loud gunshots echo, word of hate like tsunami sweeping, questions "Why are you here?" cries of corruption, songs of hatred and sentence of pain.

I can smell racism, which is like cheese with mould way past its expiring date, sitting next to a plate of rotting fish sprinkled with sulphuric stench. A drifting aroma of fear and death

I can taste ignorance pies it will make me sick with manure, rotten eggs were expired like a 1-year ago, with grandma's toenail nail and clippings with smelling bodies.

I can speak racism in an angry way saying, "Get out of here you, distinctive (swearing) BEEP!

Racism causes violence so we have to stop it now!

Holding hands with a brudda that shows how?



# My Life

18 - Poets First



This is my story this is my song  
It might get emotional cuz it kinda went wrong

It started way back when I was four  
It wasn't fair cuz my mom didn't want me any more

If I met her I would ask her why?  
That's why I always try, never to drink and never to die

This is my story this is my song  
It might get emotional cuz it kinda went wrong

I'm always thinking about my future  
Playing at the O2 not on the computer  
Rocking out on stage with Metallica but better

Playing with them would be amazing  
Rocking out with Metallica would be crazy

But now I am sitting in my room with some mates eating pancakes  
Playing quieter singing along drinking coke because it's really tasty  
Sometimes I am alone and I look into the end I ask my why

That was my story that was my song  
Told you it was emotional cuz it kinda went wrong.





# Lifeless

It makes you laugh but makes me cry  
Makes me feel like I want to die

So I take a blade to my wrist  
I cut cut cut without a miss

Bleeding out I whisper goodbye  
The pain is gone it's over now

No breath left lifeless and cold  
Mother runs into the bedroom  
and screams out loud

Oh baby girl what did you do  
They took my life without meaning to

They thought it was a game but I found it true  
There's others like me and more like you  
So think before you take their life too

**Written by**  
**Rowan Dunn**



# Love in Life

To love in life not everyone gets a chance  
Do we have to go to Rome to get romance?

In the valley of valentines there isn't no absence of love  
linked together is like a cold hand in a glove

It's not like Romeo and Juliet  
Like when the Montague's and Capulet's met

Sprinkle of laughter and shower of tears  
Swimming all alone in a fountain of fear

When you get your first kiss it's like a warm dream  
When you're in a dream it's like a warm pretty place

Written by  
Shelby Gubbins





**Friendship**





I love my best mate she is so pretty  
She is perfect she's cool and witty

She makes me laugh she is funny  
Amazing and sweet like honey

I asked her for an answer on a test  
She thought I was stupid and a pest

She told me the answer  
So I knew we were going to be friends  
We'll be together forever till the world ends

I love my best friend she is the vision of beauty  
To protect her is my call of duty

We do straight hair we don't do curls  
We are the realist girls

I pick her up like my tablet picks up Wi-Fi  
I know that on her I can rely

She is like my sister, When she is not around  
She knows I have missed her



# Aspirations

I went to the shop to buy a diet coke  
Looked at the prices said bruv what a joke

Said to my mom can I have a maccies  
She said no so I was begging her please

So I went to Merry Hill and I went to JD'S  
Said to my mom can u buy me these jeans  
She said no so I said to myself  
Why you being so mean

So I went back home and turned on my TV  
I was with my nephew so I had to watch CBBC

When I'm older I will have all the cars  
I promised myself I will never be behind bars.





# Mi Com a England 2012

Mi draw a book from top a di shelve  
Mi write mi name call Dannah  
Dem fi put mi second name pon di school banner  
Remember mi come from barn Savannah  
Suh mi an mi gyal sowi act inna manner  
Jamaican school wi folla di rules  
Com a England dem tun wi inna fools  
Pickney pan corridor a run an a shout  
Dem fi cum a Jamaica fi know what its all about  
See dem uniform drop pass dem knee  
Dem a gwuan like dem hot like Britney  
Uno fi show unu teacher respect  
Thats what them really expect





# Champ Football

Watch me play football I am in midfield,  
I will protect you like a Roman shield.

In the top corner I scored a goal,  
Football is in my heart and soul.

Watch me as I fire a shot,  
It burns the ball it is so hot.

Just like Beckham the ball curls,  
Boys are rubbish the best are the girls.

They run fast but never catch me,  
Read the back of my shirt, it says Courtney!



# I'm the Captain

Wheelchair Football is in my soul  
Every month I score a goal

I'm the captain that makes sense  
I'm the king of attack and defence

I protect my team like a Roman shield  
My main man josh who is like Mesutozil is in midfield

He plays all the key passes to me  
Three in a box equals a penalty

Were gonna have a replay, a stadium sequal  
Wheelchair Football makes me feel equal



# Miles of Style

A lot of people think I have style  
You see me coming from a mile

Check me out the girls think I am fine  
And all the girls wish they were mine

I don't mind being funny  
Cuz I'll make me loads of money

Ladies think I am a teaser  
But honestly I just like to please ya!!

Written by  
Hayden Russell





# Love Starts with a Kiss

Love starts with a kiss  
Love is sometimes hit and miss

Love sometimes puts you in tears  
We are meant to be together for years and years

Love is a feeling that bubbles inside  
When love holds your hand it makes me proud

Listening when you whistle to me  
We will be together forever wait you'll see  
I want to say I love you

A close-up photograph of a person's face, focusing on the right eye which is looking down with a tearful expression. A large, thick, magenta-colored quotation mark is superimposed on the right side of the image, partially covering the eye and cheek. The background is a soft-focus skin texture.

# What Makes Me Sad

Someone is making me sad,  
And treats me very bad.

They're always mean,  
It's like I'm not seen.

I always cry,  
I don't know why.

I always get bullied,  
Why me?





# We Have a Voice

We come in many shapes and sizes  
We are all very different  
Although our goal is the same

We have a voice so listen  
To our opinions our thoughts  
They are very useful

We have a voice so stop and pay attention  
we may take a while, But it's worth it

We are united in our mission  
A mission that will benefit us all  
You just don't accept that yet

We are united ready to fight  
With reason and persuasion  
We fight for our rights  
For an easier way of life

We can do this we are united  
We are ready, we have a voice

Written by  
**Lesley Ackford**



# My Rock Poem

I change my life by inspiring,  
When I play my guitar people are admiring.

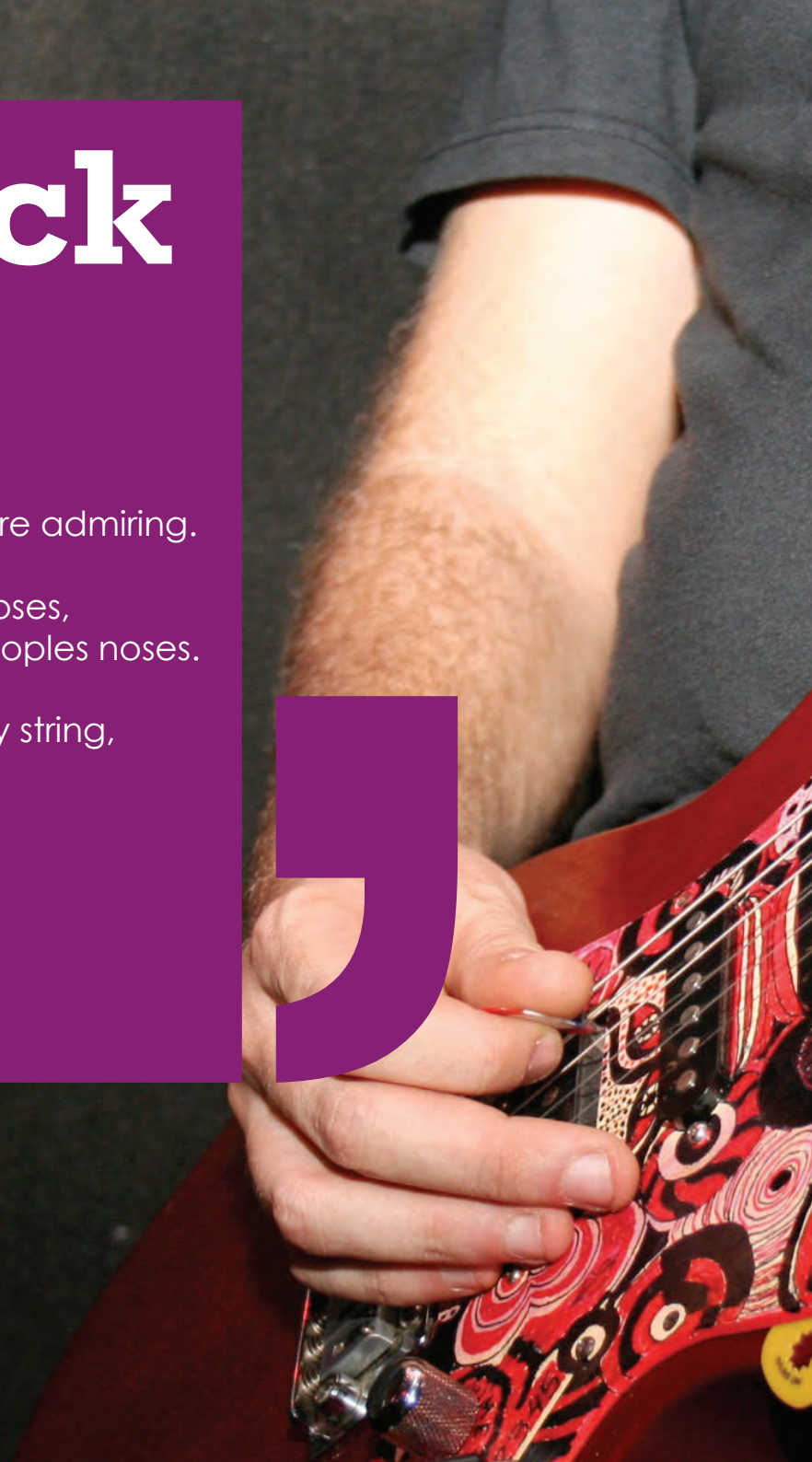
I listen to the sound of Guns n Roses,  
Even though it gets up some peoples noses.

Sometimes I have to replace my string,  
Because I catch it with my ring.

I am expressive  
No need to be aggressive.

When I play my guitar,  
I feel like a star!

J



# Changing Lives

Changing Lives by not bullying,  
Stop the river of tears from crying.

It started off with a gentle wack,  
And then turned into a full attack.

I went to the canteen and got a kick,  
It made me feel suddenly sick.

Bullying makes people sad,  
My teacher said "Stop being so bad."



# See Me

See me play on Call of Duty  
My game crafting is a beauty

Top score on all Spiderman games  
Worldwide they remember my name

Watch me as I play just dance  
No one's watching in my blue underpants

I like to play all day on my Play Station  
But I really do not like confrontation





# Passion

My name is Sanah  
I have a passion for fashion

I come out like bam  
then I give him beats  
I don't give a damn

People think I am shy  
But really I'm super fly

I love making people laugh  
Capturing moments like a photograph

Music so loud with that boom boom  
Clap sound in my headphones  
Put on your sneakers and  
Move your feet like a little sleeker  
All you gotta do is have some hope  
Fix your fashion and dress dope

I got funny bunnies in my back yard  
But I got more money on my credit card



# Active

Everyone says I've got the X-Factor  
But really I'm one dramatic actor

All week I'm totally active  
That is the way I want to live

School, 'Changing Our Lives', it's all hard work  
I wish I had a spaceship like Captain Kirk

In my spare time I'm a soppy romantic  
I'd zip my girl right across the Atlantic

Written by  
Alex Johnson



# Signing

Sign to sing is my big thing  
I also like to have a swim  
While I am singing my Welsh hymn

I have a lot of signing books  
I often read them while Mum cooks

When I am drinking from my cup  
I am signing 'wind the bobbin up'

Eating all of my Mum's chocs  
While I am sitting on my box



# Helpful

Helping my friend with her problems  
Makes me happy  
Helping you, helping you.  
This is how I feel when I'm helping you.

Helping my Mom at home tidy my room  
Makes me feel helpful  
Helping you, helping you.  
This is how I feel when I'm helping you.

Helping my teacher do some jobs  
Makes me feel useful  
Helping you, helping you.  
This is how I feel when I'm helping you.

Helping a stranger to find his way  
Makes me feel good inside  
Helping you, helping you.  
This is how I feel when I'm helping you.

When someone helps me  
I feel loved and special  
Helping me , helping me  
This is how I feel when someone is helping me.

# Help You

How can I help you  
With the things you cant do?  
Can I carry your bag  
Or you book?

How can I help you  
With the things you cant do?  
Can I give you a drink  
Or a snack?

How can I help you  
With the things you cant do?  
Can I push you somewhere  
Or zip up your coat?

How can I help you  
With the things you cant do?  
Tell me please  
How can I help you?





Changing Our Lives  
22 - 24 Hagley Mews  
Hall Drive  
Hagley  
West Midlands  
DY9 9LQ

Tel: 0300 302 0770  
Email: [ask@changingourlives.org](mailto:ask@changingourlives.org)  
Web: [www.changingourlives.org](http://www.changingourlives.org)

Registered Charity No: 1093883  
Registered Company No: 4404093