



TRUST: George Thomson says he never saw Mr Brown behave inappropriately.  
Picture: BILL HENRY

## City friends stand up for man arrested for child sex abuse

JOANNA VALLELY

FRIENDS today rallied round an Edinburgh Christian charity boss charged with sexual offences against children in Albania.

They insisted there was no truth in the allegations made against evangelist David Brown, who runs the His Children home for street children in Tirana.

Mr Brown was arrested on May 16, with other workers at the orphanage, and is being held in custody, charged with abuse of children in his care.

Friends said Mr Brown lived in Edinburgh for about ten years before moving to the Albanian capital to found the orphanage around five years ago.

He attended Leith Baptist Church in Madeira Street and more recently Bellevue Chapel in Rodney Street, where he returns annually to speak about his work in Tirana.

The 55-year-old used to run Bible classes and camping holidays for underprivileged children in the Capital in the early 1990s.

Today one of those children, now grown up, and Mr Brown's former landlady and fellow camp organiser defended the charity worker.

His former landlady, Eleanor Mossie, 58, from Cramond, said Mr Brown loved children, but was always careful not to find himself in compromising situations with them.

And she said that his elderly parents, who live near Oban, were "devastated" by the charges.



Mrs Mossie said she had known Mr Brown for nearly two decades after meeting him at the Madeira Street church. She was adamant that the accusations against him "could not be true", and said she had been happy for him to take her two boys, then aged seven and ten, on a caravan holiday with other children to the west coast.

She said: "He knew life hadn't been easy for me and money was tight."

Mrs Mossie said Mr Brown organised lots of trips to take Edinburgh children to the Port Bann campsite, near Lochgilphead in Argyll, where they stayed up to 16 to a caravan, boys in one, girls in another. Later she would accompany him on those trips to look after the girls.

"He gave children hugs who would just get a bat around the lug from their own parents. When children meet him there's an instant rapport. He's got smiling eyes.

"But he was always careful not to find himself in compromising situations, knowing what people are like in this day and age."

Mr Brown moved in with the Mossies for two years at their home in the Fort.

"He didn't pay rent as he had no money. He constantly moved about as he had no regular income and believed God supplied his needs," said Mrs Mossie.

George Thomson, 24, from Stenhouse, said Mr Brown had become like a father to him since he met him shortly after losing his own dad at the age of eight.

He said: "I don't believe this at all.

I'd love to be there right now to support David. He'd never do what he's been accused of."

The kitchen assistant said Mr Brown used to go around local primary schools holding weekly Bible classes after school.

He told how they went on half a dozen camping holidays together and he never saw Mr Brown behave inappropriately to himself or other children.

He said: "David stayed in a separate room in the same caravan as the boys. He is a fatherly figure and children loved that about him. He was affectionate in a Christian way and I would often go to David for a hug to thank him for being a male figure in my life."

The children's home in Tirana has been shut down while Mr Brown is in custody.jvallely@edinburghnews.com

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