



Harrogate District of Sanctuary

A place where refugees and asylum seekers feel safe, welcome and included

Summer Newsletter 2018

HDS was formed at the end of 2016/ beginning of 2017 following increasing awareness of the effects of the war in Syria, the desperate plight of refugees, and the desire to 'do something about it'! During 2017 we arranged a series of open meetings, presenting the issues faced by refugees and asylum seekers. We also arranged several social events including a day in the country and a Christmas Party.

We seem to have packed a lot in to the last twelve months: We held open meetings in September and November 2017 and again in April and June this year. In December we had a wonderful Christmas Party, with a children's entertainer and a Santa's Grotto. January saw our AGM and from March we have held a social get together once a month. At the May gathering we celebrated the end of Ramadan with an Eid Iftar meal.....



The meal was held at the Friends Meeting House and several of our Quaker friends joined us. Members of the Harrogate Islamic association also came. The food was amazing! Everyone brought a contribution and we provided soft drinks including the delicious 'Saudi Champagne'.

Observing Islamic custom we couldn't eat until sunset (9.23!) then we broke the fast with a drink of water or milk and some dates...only then could we start on the banquet. The evening finished with prayers for the Muslims



Jonas Centre Visit

....and the end of June saw us taking to the hills as we took nine of the refugee families from the district to Wensleydale for the weekend.

We took over the entire site of the Jonas Centre, which is at Redmire in Wensleydale. There are 12 cabins so each family had their own self-catering accommodation, and committee members and volunteers had the remaining cabins. We had exclusive use of the site including the large barn with catering kitchen, outdoor dining, playing fields, playground etc. We are extremely grateful for the following organisations and groups who generously sponsored this visit: The Wharfedale Foundation; North Yorkshire CC Refugee Resettlement programme; Knaresborough and Wensleydale Rotary Clubs and the Harrogate Lions. Without their support we would not have been able to take the families for this much needed respite break. The families had a wonderful time and without exception want to go again next year, and stay longer!!

Huge thanks also to all the staff at the Jonas Centre for their help and support.



The setting is beautiful and the men and children had a great time playing football and other games. We had a huge barbecue on Saturday evening where we were joined by guests from Wensleydale Rotary Club, the Ripon City of Sanctuary, and others.

Schools of Sanctuary: City of Sanctuary is a national network of cities, towns and villages of Sanctuary, committed to ensuring a warm welcome for those who have had to flee their homes, and helping them to become integrated and independent. Within the national movement there are several 'Streams' including Sports, Arts, Maternity and Schools. Schools of Sanctuary, 'learn', 'embed' and 'share' the principles and values of City of Sanctuary, including Inclusiveness, Openness and Participation. In Harrogate, Grove Road Primary is a School of Sanctuary. We are currently supporting Springwater School to become a School of Sanctuary and we hope to reach out to other schools in the district.

Shops of Sanctuary: Another 'stream' is Shops of Sanctuary, again with the aims of embedding and sharing the values above, raising awareness of the issues faced by refugees and asylum seekers. On a National level Oxfam shops are working towards accreditation as 'Shop of Sanctuary' and we hope to be supporting the Oxfam shops in Harrogate to do the same. In addition the Harrogate branch of Lush are very supportive of Harrogate District of Sanctuary and in particular the Women's Group so again we will work with them to become a Shop of Sanctuary

Future Plans:

20th September: Open Meeting: "Hope in the Midst of Crisis" with presentations from Michelle Beckett of the World Evangelical Alliance on 'Welcoming the Stranger' and from Jonathan Spencer, Project Manager of NYCC Refugee Resettlement, talking about his work.

November Open meeting – to be arranged

Social afternoons: We will continue with our monthly gatherings, with our September meeting involving a drumming workshop!!

English Language: We will to work closely with Nina Jolly of the Harrogate School of English to supplement the class provided by NYCC with one to one Home Learning

2019 – Week Away! We are starting to think about another few days in Wensleydale, in response to the overwhelming wish of the families

Find out more:

We welcome the opportunity to visit local groups to tell them about the District of Sanctuary and our work with Refugees and Asylum Seekers.

If you would like to know more, or would like to join us as a volunteer or supporter or would like us to come and talk to your group we would love to hear from you.

Volunteer with us:

We are always pleased to have people sign up to come and integrate with our families, expanding their opportunities to speak English in an informal setting.

In particular we are now hoping to recruit young people (18+) who can support the children's activities and games.

Please contact: Jenny Travena at
jtravena@hotmail.co.uk

Sponsored by:

Wharfedale Foundation:

NYCC

Harrogate Lions

Knaresborough Rotary Club

Wensleydale Rotary Club



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