

Derby Refugee Forum
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Derby Refugee Advice Centre

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Derby Refugee Advice Centre offers signposting, support and English classes, plus a food and clothing bank. In the last eighteen months we've introduced a busy programme of training and recreational workshops. Keep your

eyes peeled on the notice board for further events listed. The photo above shows some of our Wirksworth Community Gardeners. A great day out—FREE fun and activity in the Derbyshire countryside, a chance to make new friends and

learn new skills. We planted a salad garden and vegetables, in addition to weeding and turning the soil. There was also a train trip, a delicious lunch and a tour of the historic church.

Volunteer Opportunities

If you are a budding writer, graphic designer or photographer, you're welcome to join the DRAC team, helping to create future newsletters and publicity materials.

Please speak to a member of the DRAC team for further information.

The Founders of Derby Refugee Advice Centre—Thank you!

In November 2002 Derby Refugee Advice Centre officially opened its doors. **David Callow, Ferid Kevric, Ann Watts and Alison Clarkson Webb** had talked about the idea for two years. Refugee Action had closed down their Derby office and it was recognized that those seeking sanctuary in the city required extra support and signposting. DRAC opened its doors every Tuesday and Thursday, initially helping many Kurdish asylum seekers, with a

succession of Kurdish interpreters assisting in consultations. It's thanks to the enterprise and initiative of these founding fathers that DRAC exists today. The conflicts overseas may have shifted to different shores but we're still here to help. It's important that we recognize the compassion and commitment that DRAC's first management team brought to the cause. Both David Callow and Ann Watts remain on the Management Committee, shaping and advising on strategy. Meanwhile, Joan

Stannard is manager and new teams of volunteers continue to step forward as advisors and assistants. Thanks to all involved in creating and sustaining DRAC over the years - the staff, volunteers, council, individual donors, churches and funding bodies.

Plus, of course, a special thanks to our clients, whose courage and dignity helps to motivate and guide our endeavours.

Thank you !!!

Flower Power



With 21 clients arranging baskets for good causes, we donated bouquets to four Derby care homes and a city homeless hostel. Fabulous tutors Doreen and Joan guided us, making elegant arrangements with seasonal blooms.



Volunteer Heroes

Here at Derby Refugee Advice Centre, we're passionate about promoting the virtues of volunteering. Although most asylum seekers are forbidden employment, many are allowed to take on volunteer roles at charities and community projects. We've put together a comprehensive list of all Derbyshire charities, so if you'd like to donate some of your free time to helping others this is a brilliant way to share talent, learn skills and support vulnerable people living in this region. Charity shops, humanitarian organizations, wildlife and gardening groups....these are just some of the options for social integration and community aid. Ask a member of the DRAC team if you're looking for inspiration or signposting. Volunteers are the heroes of local society.

DRAC has a fantastic team of volunteer advisors, interpreters and technical staff. Some of our recent volunteers are proving to be real stars - Shelan, Majid, Huda, Kamall, Saad, Fiona and Adli are all recent recruits. They come from Iraq, Iran, Eritrea, Kuwait, Zimbabwe and Libya reflecting the range of international talent which makes DRAC such a dynamic and inspiring place. We hope that you feel at ease with our friendly team. They are always eager to help.



Majid—Data Input & IT



Huda & Kamal—Kitchen/Catering



Adli—Meet & Greet /Kitchen & Clothing



Transgender Awareness Day—Lovely ladies Jayne & Steph tell their story.

On 20th November, 2014, we were joined by a representatives of the city's transgender community, as they talked about gender, sexuality and equality.

As a ten year old boy Dave realized that he was trapped in the wrong body. However, not until he was fifty years of age did he finally begin living life as a woman—Jayne.

Having gone through the teenage years with peer pressure and girl-friends, he went on to marry and have

children, yet always repressing his truest urge, that innate feeling that he was in his heart a woman.

On his second date with Steph he explained that he was leading a double life and asked if she would accept him as 'Jayne.' They went back to Dave's home and Steph watched the transformation as Dave put on a skirt and heels. Steph had already started to fall in love with Dave and those feelings grew stronger and stronger. They went on to marry. The family have been very supportive. Jayne and Steph were invited to DRAC to discuss the sometimes controversial topic of gender reassignment and sexuality. Some clients initially said that this topic was 'haram' or 'sin'. However, at the end of a fascinating and very candid talk, the audience gave a rapturous round of applause. It was a touching and inspiring discussion on being honest with yourself, making daring choices and being loved.

Welfare Benefits—Osa McArdle gives an important talk on DWP support



Our most well-attended workshop was hosted by Osa McArdle of Derby Citizens Advice Bureau and Law Centre on 14th May, 2015. Talking about Welfare Benefits including JSA, ESA, Child Tax Credit and Universal Credit, we also discussed benefit fraud, pathways out of benefit dependency and options for part-time and flexible working, plus retraining to meet your career goals.

There was team work, handouts to take away, plus certificates given upon completion of the session and prizes for involvement and ideas.

Five a Day

Albert Biete of Baltus Healthcare did an exciting culinary demonstration with clients offered fresh smoothies and salads to boost their health and wellbeing. Cooking on a budget can require some imagination and flair if you want to produce enticing dishes. However, Albert made it look easy as he whipped up carrot smoothies alongside colourful salads comprised of radishes, lettuce, courgette, tomatoes, nuts, cabbage and apple. The dishes were light and refreshing, plus easy to prepare. DRAC are looking forward to exploring more Cooking on a Budget ideas. Your recipes and suggestions are welcome and can be printed in our next newsletter, putting world cuisine on the menu.



Cancer Awareness with Baltus Healthcare

Great thanks to Albert Biete and Macmillan Cancer Support who brought us two very important cancer awareness-raising workshops. The importance of a healthy lifestyle, nutrition and diet were discussed and lots of myths and misunderstandings were cleared up too. Do deodorants cause cancer? Will I get cancer by sitting near a printer or photocopier? Lots of questions and fears were considered and Macmillan offered a reassuring and approachable presence where we all felt that we could face our fears and take some control of our lives by making healthy choices.

British Red Cross First Aid



We host regular First Aid training sessions which are run by the British Red Cross.

The skills taught include:

- Helping someone who is having a heart attack
- Helping someone who is having a stroke
- Helping someone who is having a seizure (epileptic fit)
- Helping someone who is choking
- Helping someone who has a burn or scald
- Helping an unconscious person who is or is not breathing

You are welcome to come along to any of these events. These are life-saving skills which are important for all of us.