

Birmingham Schools of Sanctuary

Newsletter No. 6 July 2020

This time last year, we were offering you a bumper edition of our newsletter with reports about many of the inspiring activities which took place in our schools during Refugee Week.

This year, things are very different, with schools sharing our lockdown experience and working with only a few pupils in the building and with online activities for others.

Nonetheless, teachers have, as usual, been imaginative and determined, and we can share here some of the results. We start with a report from Welsh House Farm (they received the School of Sanctuary Award in July 2017 and we will be looking forward to giving them their updated award in the autumn term!), followed by some photos of work done at St Vincent's (who received their first award in 2015 and received the updated award in December last year), St Anthony's, and Allen's Croft (who received their award in July 2018). Finally, we offer a sign of hope from pioneering Halesowen College, which became our first College of Sanctuary early this year.

At the moment of course, nobody knows what schools will look like post-lockdown. We do, however, hope that we can start visiting again in the new academic year so that we can support you in your amazing and dedicated work.

With best wishes for a restful summer,

Barbara

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Refugee Week at Welsh House Farm School.

Despite the circumstances beyond our control, we were still able to do a great deal of different and enjoyable activities. Whether the children worked at home or took part remotely, they still thoroughly loved learning.

Some children took part in the 'The Virtual Giant Dolls House Project.' This was an international project where people all over the world participated. The children created houses made out of shoe boxes to raise awareness for refugees and homelessness. Whilst making it they had to be very imaginative and think about things such as, what home means to them, how would they feel if they had to leave their home and what would they take with them. Photographs of the houses were taken and sent to the company for them to publish on the website. It was amazing to see our houses amongst all the other astounding houses on their social media.

Year 6 children worked together via zoom and wrote a brilliant poem to go with the theme "Imagine".

Short stories about refugees were shared on the school's twitter and facebook so that children and parents were able to watch and gain more knowledge,

Children and teachers wrote their dreams and this was sent to 'Migrant Help' so that they could put up a huge display all about 'dreaminess'.

Children had to imagine that someone new was moving into their area and make a poster to show how they would welcome them. This was sent to 'Reset Communities and Refugees', where they were shared on their social media.

On the following pages you can see some of the images WHF sent us, and the poem written by Year 6.

This year's Refugee Week theme was "Imagine... a better world", which prompted these reflections from Year 6 at Welsh House Farm.

Imagine if...

Imagine if we were all treated equally...

Imagine if we could live anywhere freely where we could love whomever and wherever...

Imagine if we were all kind-hearted people, in a world where everyone can be loved and create a future together...

Imagine if we could accept each other as we are with no discrimination or argument..

Imagine if we lived in a place where we are not suspicious of one another and no one is a stranger...

Imagine if there were no bombs, terrorists, murderers, gangs, racism, sexism, or enemies...

Imagine if all wars ended and no new wars were started...

Imagine if our world was full of happiness and joy where we have the right to live without persecution...

Imagine if there was no poverty to hold us back and no more excuses to prevent us from moving forward to achieve our dreams...

Imagine if showing kindness and love was easier than hatred and fear...

Imagine if all children could create happy childhood memories...

Imagine if we could hold someone's hand every step of the way...

Imagine if we all had somewhere safe and secure to lay our heads at night that we can gratefully call home.



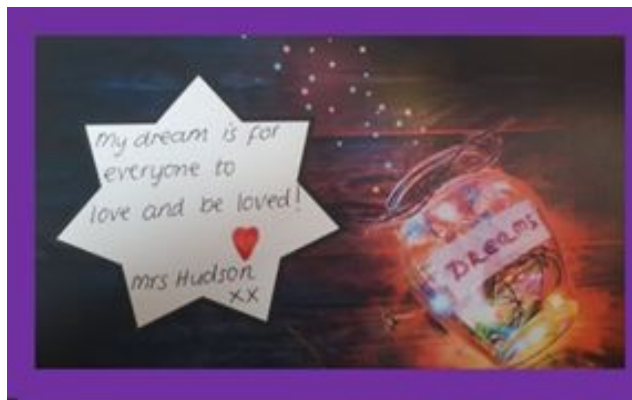
This is a collage of the 'The Giant Doll House' Project =which Welsh House Farm took part in.

Below is an Instagram page showing many of the doll houses in the project.



The pupils (and teachers) were encouraged to share their dreams. These dreams will be familiar to anybody who works with children – they dream of being ballerinas, footballers, paramedics, amazing chefs; they want to have a guinea pig, to go to Blackpool on holiday, to sit on a beach, to visit family in Bristol, to climb up a beanstalk, to visit Antarctica to meet the penguins. But they also want to help people by becoming doctors, scientists or superheroes or by finding a cure for coronavirus, and they dream of a world without racism and in which everybody has a home. On the next page are a few of the images they produced (there isn't enough space to include all of them, unfortunately) and including the dreams of Lucy Hudson and Simone Grant, the amazing members of staff who have done and who continue to do so much for this School of Sanctuary.

Welsh House Farm pupils and teachers share their dreams



St Vincent's Primary School in **Nechells** sent this poster for "Imagine a new world". It was completed by a vulnerable child who attended school during the Lockdown. Thank you to Colum Davis for this, and to the Head Janet Tibbits for steering the school through this difficult time and for her ongoing support for Schools of Sanctuary.

At the moment we are worried about our children and how much fresh air they are having because they live in high rise flats - we fear that the journey of recovery will be long. The school is also doubling as a food bank.



St Anthony's Primary School in Chelmsley Wood worked with children of key workers during Refugee Week:

Teacher Heidi Otis encouraged the children to make binoculars out of empty toilet rolls and decorate them with the idea that we can look through the binoculars and see what we can 'Imagine'. There were some lovely ideas, but the children decided on 'Imagine a nice warm bed.'



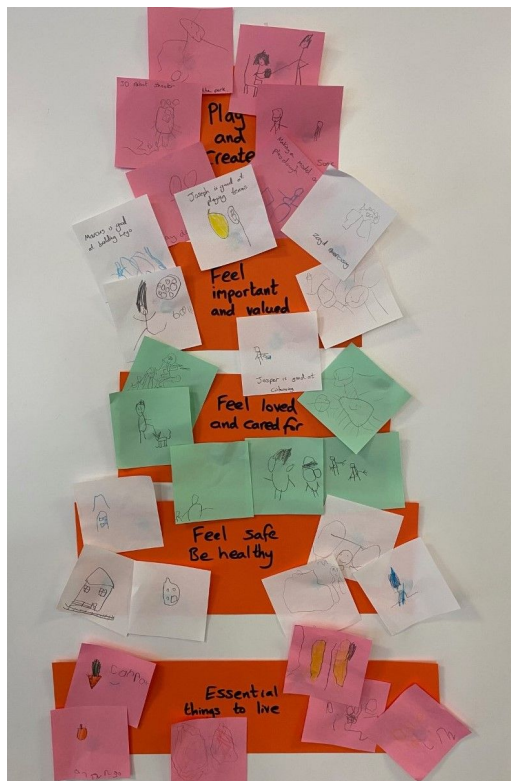
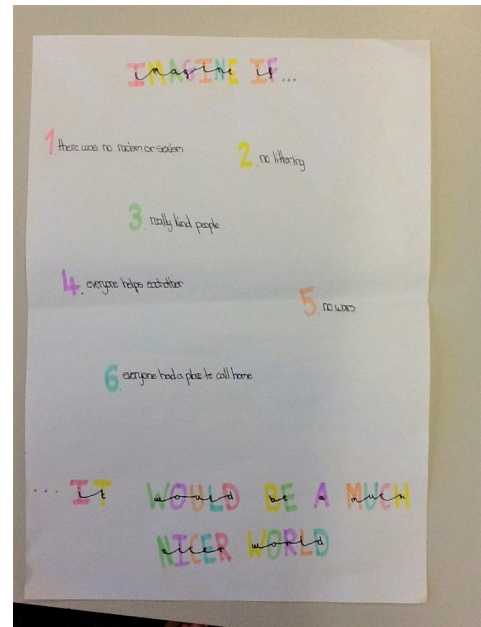
At Allen's Croft, Beth Smith coordinated the work.

The Year 6 bubbles talked about the theme “Imagine” and imagined the world they wanted to live in. They created posters to display their ideas.

One of our Year R key worker bubbles retold the story of Dino and Sana and recorded it so we could share it with the rest of the bubbles.

Other year groups shared some form of Refugee Week work as part of their online learning.

Here are the thoughts of a Y6 child who imagined what she would like the world to be like. *Imagine if - there was no racism or sexism, no littering, really kind people, everyone helps each other, no wars, everyone has a place to call home - it would be a much nicer world.*



The Reception bubble completed an activity from the Refugee Week activity booklet. They thought about each level of the pyramid and drew a picture of something appropriate to go alongside. The images represent what is important to the children - for example their family, their pets, what they are good at - and the comments include “Feel important and valued”, “Being loved and cared for”, “Being safe and healthy” “Play and create”. The lower end of the pyramid represents those things which the children thought were essential to live.

Caroline Williams of Halesowen College has sent us this sign of hope.

Halesowen College committed to taking part in the 36,000 humans project sometime in 2019, and we settled on representing a tiny 1% of those people who lost their lives traveling to Europe with a display of 360 origami birds flying overhead in the open atrium of our Student Hub.

Each bird would have the name and details of one of those 36,000 people written on it, and they would be created by our staff and students at our 'Diversity Day' in April, when our college community comes together to celebrate the different people and cultures that make us a welcoming and safe place for all. The plan was to display the birds at college for a while and then move them to the larger 36,000 humans display organised by Bearwood Action for Refugees for Refugee Week 2020.

As for so many, lockdown and Covid-19 made all of these plans impossible to implement, however we still wanted to mark the occasion and show publicly that the plight of refugees and asylum seekers is of huge importance to us as a College of Sanctuary. Therefore I braved the puzzled looks of the folk in my local park, and created a display of 16 birds as a small representation of our foiled plans.

The photos received positive feedback on Social Media and hopefully raised a little awareness of Refugee Week during an already challenging time for everyone

