



West End Refugee Service

strength through support



Issue 69: April 2017

Pastures new for Evelyne!



Evelyne, our clothing store supervisor, left WERS in March to begin a masters degree in nursing at Northumbria University. A few years ago WERS was pleased to give her day release to enable her to study for her first degree in Health and Social Care.

Her long association with WERS began when she came as a client and it has been a joy to see her grow and develop her skills over the years.

We all wish Evelyne a successful and rewarding career in nursing.

Due to the current funding situation we are not in a position to replace Evelyne at the moment. The volunteer team supported by the staff are working hard to keep the store running smoothly and we are very grateful to them for all their hard work.

**Bringing donations to the store:
4 ways you can really help our
volunteers:**

- 1) Remember not to bring furniture items or carpet – we are unable to take them. Sorry!
- 2) Please do not bring electrical items of any kind
- 3) If you have a large load of donations to bring, please phone us first
- 4) Please separate men's, women's and kids' clothes and label the bags whenever possible

This will save our volunteers a lot of time and free them up to look after the customers!



**THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR
HELP!**

Project Costs Appeal update

Since the appeal was launched in the January newsletter, over £25,000 has been raised through individual and church donations. This is fantastic!

The extraordinary generosity of our supporters has only been matched by the messages of encouragement we have also received. We still have a long way to go, but what a great start!

Thank you!

WERS in the national and local press and on local radio

WERS has had some great coverage in the press the last couple of months:

The Guardian

Read Harriet Sherwood's excellent article here:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/03/money-love-volunteers-uk-helping-asylum-seekers-government-support-charities-faith-groups>

BBC Radio Newcastle

Producer Jo Lonsdale recorded some interviews at the project and put together a very good piece for the Sunday morning show.

Bishop Mark volunteering at WERS

The Rt Revd Mark Tanner, the Bishop of Berwick, volunteered for charities around Newcastle and Northumberland throughout Lent and we were delighted to welcome him to spend the day with us on 27th March. Read his article in the Chronicle at:

<http://www.chroniclive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/how-one-newcastle-charity-takes-12850219>

Newcastle City Council Cabinet puts an end to private companies forcing asylum seekers to share bedrooms

For asylum seekers who may be trying to deal with the effects of trauma and separation from their family and friends, having to share a bedroom with a total stranger who may speak a different language can be hugely problematic. Everyone needs somewhere that provides a little privacy and some personal space.

Within Jomast, the property company subcontracted by G4S to provide accommodation for asylum seekers, the practice of forcing asylum seekers to share bedrooms has been commonplace.

In a hugely important and significant move, Newcastle City Council cabinet have now put an end to this practice. Councillor Nick Forbes, leader of Newcastle City Council, said: "What we want to ensure is that when people are housed they are housed in conditions that we find acceptable."

WERS applauds the City Council for this decision which will make a real difference to the lives of asylum seekers.

<http://www.chroniclive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/private-firms-banned-forcing-asylum-12771797>

Call for Volunteers at Haltwhistle Plant Festival & Craft Fair 19th and 20th May 2017

We're excited to share the news that WERS has been chosen as the charity to be supported by this year's Plant Festival & Craft Fair in Haltwhistle. The festival takes place at **Haltwhistle Swimming and Leisure Centre on Saturday 20th May** (9.30am-3.30pm). All funds raised will go towards the WERS hardship fund to support our destitute clients and we need people to help at the event!

Volunteers are needed on the Friday afternoon setting up (2-5.30pm) and on Saturday, there are half-day shifts 9am-12.30pm and 12-5pm (working in the café, as car park stewards and selling raffle tickets, and taking down stalls). There are also two swimming pools and other facilities available on site www.haltwhistleleisure.co.uk. It's a popular event which should be good fun.

If you are interested in helping please contact Hannah volunteers@wers.org.uk.

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