

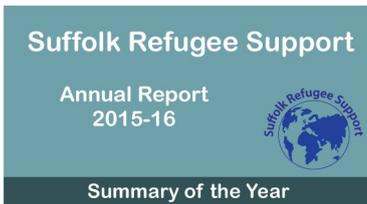


# Suffolk Refugee Support Newsletter

Autumn 2016



[www.suffolkrefugee.org.uk](http://www.suffolkrefugee.org.uk)  
38 St Matthew's Street, IPSWICH, Suffolk IP1 3EP



## SRS Annual Report highlights great demand for our support services

Each year, the publication of our Annual Report gives us the chance to take stock of the work we've done, the challenges we face and the achievements of the refugees and asylum seekers of Suffolk. The 2015-16 year has been an exceptionally busy one, with high demand for our services and our voice in the refugee debate, alongside the work we have taken on supporting Syrian families arriving in Suffolk. This is set against a backdrop of considerable funding uncertainty. Throughout it all, the people we see have continued to show great resilience and will to succeed in rebuilding their lives. We thank them for making our work so rewarding, and everyone who has helped and supported us.



It has been a challenging year at SRS, as the ripples of record worldwide displacement continue to reach us here in Suffolk. We continue to work tirelessly to support high numbers of vulnerable people, among them for the first time resettled Syrian families. Our profile has never been higher, with increased publicity of our work including national TV coverage, but the funding environment remains highly uncertain. We have been deeply moved by the response of the wider community in Suffolk to the plight of refugees over the last year, from generous individual donors and people organising fundraising events, to an upsurge in volunteer numbers and offers of help. We are very grateful to all for enabling us to support so many people with complex needs.

*"Suffolk Refugee Support is such a beacon example of the good help and will of people in our region and in our communities"*  
Richard Howitt, MEP for East of England, 2015

Suffolk Refugee Support aims to provide a warm welcome to those who have left their countries fearing for their safety. We help to rebuild shattered lives and support individuals to become fully functioning members of UK society.



Among the key findings from our Annual Report:

- We delivered more than 6000 advice sessions to 535 refugees and asylum seekers from 40 countries
- Our ESOL classes helped 30 refugees to pass English exams
- Across all our projects, our volunteers gave us an amazing 8000 hours of their time

You can read the report in full here:

[suffolkrefugee.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/SRS-Annual-Report-2016\\_Final.pdf](http://suffolkrefugee.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/SRS-Annual-Report-2016_Final.pdf)

## Can you stand with us at Suffolk Refugee Support?

At Suffolk Refugee Support, we rely on donations and grants, an increasingly difficult task, to support asylum seekers and refugees who are rebuilding their lives.

Would you consider making a regular donation to make a difference for asylum seekers and refugees here in Suffolk?

Your support can make a big difference; for example, a donation of £10 a month could go towards a place in one of our English classes. £20 a month could fund a support worker's time with a newly arrived asylum seeker helping them access the services they need, like a school place for their child. £50 a month could go towards our employment service, where we help refugees build their skills, experience and interview skills to find paid employment.

Giving every month can easily be set up through MyDonate online (see the link at the top of this page), or we can post you a Standing Order form if you'd like one.



## SRS making a real difference in the lives of refugees

### Good News Stories

We're delighted to report that Bahareh, the young Iranian refugee who was the star of our Refugee Week art exhibition last year, has gained a place at Queen Mary's University to study Genetics, having achieved high grades in her 4 A-Levels, including an A\* for her extended essay, written in English, her second language! We wish Bahareh all the best as she embarks on her studies.



Four of our clients recently took part in a 6-week session of Tour Guide Training at Ipswich Museum, followed by four weeks of delivering actual tours to members of the public, accompanied by museum staff. Volunteers are trained to deliver tours focusing on the history of the museum, object-handling, talking about artefacts from their home countries and public speaking skills. Building up the confidence to speak publicly, not in their first language, was a real challenge for our clients, but it has resulted in increased self-confidence and English language skills.

Another good news story is a young Sri Lankan client who was reunited with her family here in 2012. Initially she was very shy and struggled with a complicated journey, involving two buses, to get to school. She had some English but was far from fluent. We supported her family to appeal for her to be placed in a school closer to their home. Now, four years on, she has achieved two A\*s, seven As and one B at GCSE, her confidence is greatly improved and she has transferred to Northgate High to study 4 A-Levels (Economics, Maths, Biology and Chemistry).

## International Context

The recently published UNHCR Global Trends Report makes for sobering reading and provides some much-needed context for European and UK refugee debates. The key findings include the following:

- A record 65 million people are displaced from their homes globally – more than 21 million of whom are refugees.
- Developing countries currently host 86% of the world's refugees
- Turkey hosted 2.5 million refugees at the end of 2015
- More than 1 million refugees and migrants crossed the Mediterranean in 2015
- 84% of those arriving in Europe by boat came from the world's top 10 refugee-producing countries
- More than 3,700 people died crossing the Mediterranean trying to reach Europe
- EU member states received more than 1.2 million asylum applications
- Germany and Sweden received nearly 50% of applications in the EU
- More than half the population of Syria – over 11 million people, are displaced



You can read the full report here: [www.unhcr.org/uk/global-trends-2015.html](http://www.unhcr.org/uk/global-trends-2015.html)

In the UK, we received 32,733 asylum claims (excluding dependents) in 2015, less than 3% of total claims within the EU.



## A Welcome Message

Before the summer hols our Team Manager, Rebecca, and Payman, an Iranian refugee, went to Halifax Primary School to give a talk on refugees and arrange a competition for the students to design 'Welcome' cards. We were enormously touched by the compassionate response and warm-hearted messages of the children. Some of the winning designs have been given to newly-arrived Syrian families to make them feel more welcome in their new homes. Many thanks to all the teachers and students involved.



## Summer Trips

### Summer Picnic

On a beautifully sunny July day, about 40 women and their children from our International Women's Group enjoyed a fabulous picnic in the garden of one of our volunteers. The idea of hospitality and sharing of food was evident and put our English picnics to shame! The children enjoyed playing, and the opportunity to be in a safe environment away from the town.



### The People's Community Garden



We were also lucky with the weather for our visit to the community garden. The women spent a happy few hours picking fresh fruit and vegetables to cook on the barbeque. We were brilliantly hosted by Jo and Susannah who had prepared some delicious soup and a stir fry for us. A relaxing and educational day was

spent learning about using fresh produce and encouraging the women to visit again with a view to taking on their own allotment.



## New Website

Earlier this year, we took advantage of the web design expertise of one of our volunteers to give the Suffolk Refugee Support website a thorough redesign. We wanted a cleaner, fresher look and in particular to make the site more mobile-friendly and therefore more accessible to our clients. The new site is full of up-to-date news and info on all the work we do and ways that you can get involved to help refugees. Take a look—we hope you like it! [www.suffolkrefugee.org.uk](http://www.suffolkrefugee.org.uk)



### Christmas Cards For Sale



Designed by a refugee in Suffolk, all profits from the sale of these cards will go to Suffolk Refugee Support. Packs of 10 for £3 available from the office or on sale at events.



## Spotlight on SRS Volunteers & Staff

### VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

Do you have a few hours to spare each week? Would you like to help refugees in Suffolk? We are currently looking for volunteers to help with our drop-in advice service (on Mondays), English teaching and the running of our International Women's Group, as well as a fundraising volunteer to help in our office for half a day per week. For more details and up-to-date opportunities, please go the volunteer page of our website: [www.suffolkrefugee.org.uk/what-you-can-do/volunteer](http://www.suffolkrefugee.org.uk/what-you-can-do/volunteer)

### JOB VACANCY

We are recruiting a Syrian Resettlement Programme Coordinator, to be responsible for coordinating all aspects of the resettlement of Syrian refugee families into the Ipswich area. Suffolk has agreed to accept up to 200 Syrian refugees over five years. To date, seven families have been resettled, with more to follow. This is a full-time post and the deadline is Friday 28th October. Please see our website for full details and application pack: [www.suffolkrefugee.org.uk/job-vacancy-syrian-resettlement-programme-coordinator](http://www.suffolkrefugee.org.uk/job-vacancy-syrian-resettlement-programme-coordinator)

## Events

**Many thanks to Oyster Press and Ipswich Library for the Eye for Ipswich exhibition, with many of our clients thrilled to see their fantastic artwork on public display. One refugee artist told us:**

**“In my home country of Syria I never had any opportunity to practice drawing and I was surprised how much I enjoyed learning about lino printing. The teachers were very patient and showed me what to do. At first I was shy but gradually I have got more confident and I am looking forward to seeing my work on display.”**



We are hugely grateful to all involved in the fundraising concert held at St Matthew's Church in Ipswich on behalf of SRS, particularly to Gareth for his generosity, time and organisational skills, and to the Suffolk Soul Singers, VIPs and Acafella for their wonderful performances. The concert raised an amazing £1500, and the Suffolk Soul Singers have very kindly agreed to perform at our AGM as well (see below)!

Another great success was the Pigs Gone Wild sculpture trail in Ipswich, raising funds for St Elizabeth's Hospice. The SRS pig proved popular and thought-provoking, with comments such as the following on Twitter: **“Love this little reminder of how lucky I am to have a place I feel safe in”**



We are also very grateful to LUSH for choosing us to be the beneficiaries of one of their Charity Pot Party days at their store in Ipswich. It was a great way to raise awareness of the work we do and the plight of refugees.

## AGM

**It's our AGM this Thursday 13th October 7pm at Museum St Methodist Church. Come along and hear about our work, listen to the Suffolk Soul Singers, have a chat with us and enjoy a tasty buffet!**

We hope you've enjoyed our latest newsletter—we'd love to hear from you with your feedback or if you'd like to find out further information. If you received this newsletter indirectly, and would like to join our mailing list, please email our administrator: [mwalker@suffolkrefugee.org.uk](mailto:mwalker@suffolkrefugee.org.uk)

Thank you again for all your support, donations and volunteering - we really couldn't manage without you!