



Suffolk Refugee Support Newsletter Autumn 2018

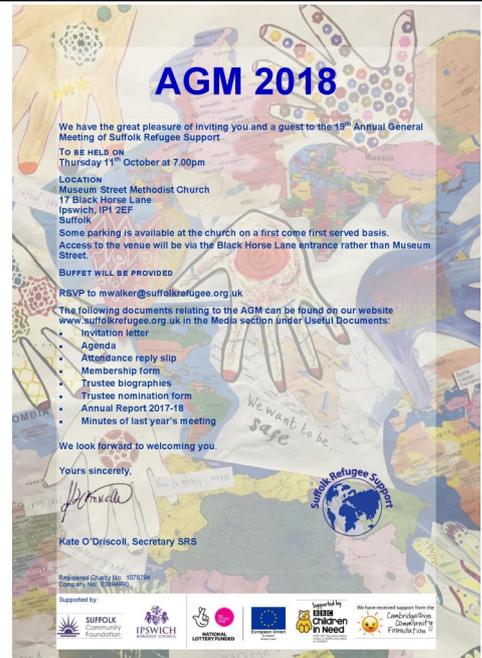


www.suffolkrefugee.org.uk
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Registered Charity Number: 1078794



Suffolk Refugee Support 2018 AGM—all are welcome

Our 19th Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 11th October from 7pm at Museum St Methodist Church, Ipswich, and all are welcome to attend. As well as the usual business part of the evening, we will be celebrating some of the educational successes of refugees and asylum seekers in Suffolk (see page 2), with one asylum seeker who has just started university with our support speaking about what it means to her. There will also be music, a display of artwork from a recent refugee art therapy group (see page 3), a few words from Sandy Martin MP, and a buffet of food made by local refugees. You can find all the AGM documents on our [website here](#). Please do join us if you can to mark another busy but successful year, ask us questions about our work, and share in the positive achievements of those we support.



SRS 2018 Christmas Cards—available now!



Yes, we know, it's far too early to be thinking about Christmas! But for those who like to plan ahead (and support a worthwhile cause!) we are very pleased to announce that our 2018 Christmas cards are available now. This year the cards are designed by a young refugee from Syria whose family we are supporting in Ipswich as part of the resettlement programme, and include her words inside—'Happy New Year, make the season bright with joy peace love and hope'.

The cards are priced at £3 for a pack of ten, with all proceeds going to the work of Suffolk Refugee Support. You can pick them up from our office in Ipswich, at our AGM or other events, from St Mary's Church Shop, Woodbridge, or by post. Please see our website for [full details of postage costs and how to order](#).

Supported by:



Education Success Stories

We are always struck by the value placed on education by so many of the refugees and asylum seekers we support. Whether arriving here not speaking a word of English, having been denied a formal education and determined that their families should have every possible opportunity, or having had university studies cut short by the conflict in Syria, every day we see the desire to learn and succeed. So we thought this year we should mark some of the amazing educational achievements of the people we see, the incredible effort of those at SRS who teach them, many of whom are volunteers, and the vital support of local schools and institutions.

SRS ESOL Classes

S is a very bright student, who clearly spent hours each week on her homework, which was of a great standard. Occasionally, so good that I photocopied it so other students could read and learn from it. S was a wonderful student to have in class; always helpful to her classmates and never arrogant, even though she clearly picked up many concepts more easily than most of her peers. Whilst unable to attend our additional Reading and Writing class, S asked for practice exams on a weekly basis and prepared as hard as she could for her exams, all of which she passed. S was awarded the highest merit possible for her Speaking and Listening exam, perhaps because she not only has great technical English but also so much to say. Her work was always a pleasure to receive, full of life, beauty and poignancy. The examiner told me he could have gone on speaking with her for hours. I am honoured to have been able to help this fantastic communicator express herself in English. [SRS ESOL Tutor]

SRS 1-to-1 Tutoring

Two students who have been receiving one-to-one tuition with SRS volunteers passed all their GCSEs and have now progressed to studying their A-Levels. Another achieved high grades in her A levels allowing her to go on to study Biomedical Science at St Georges, University of London. In total, 41 out of 43 students in our ESOL classes passed their recent speaking/listening, reading and writing exams!



SRS Education & Training

We reported in our last newsletter on Lindah, an asylum seeker who had successfully applied for a place at the University of East Anglia and a bursary with our help. We are delighted that not only will Lindah be speaking at our AGM about what this means to her, but also that we have been successful in supporting another client to gain a bursary and place at the UEA!

SRS Homework Group

A (pictured right) arrived in the UK two years ago, aged 15, with only basic English. She was moved to a foster family in Ipswich and enrolled in a secondary school, where teachers saw she had the potential to achieve some GCSEs. They agreed to move her down a school year to ensure she would be able to sit the exams the following year. A had a whole academic year of studies to catch up on, whilst at the same time having to learn English. Suffolk Refugee Support helped A through science lessons with one of our volunteers, and through additional maths help during our Homework Group.

To the surprise of her teachers, and herself, A achieved excellent results in her GCSEs, scoring higher than she thought possible with an A in Maths, B in Chemistry, Physics and Art and a C in Biology. She is now studying Maths, Chemistry and Biology A-Levels and English GCSE at the same school. A made a visit to Cambridge University, organised by SRS, which inspired her to aim to go to university after school in order to become a dietician. Suffolk Refugee Support are continuing to help A achieve this, with additional Maths and Science support.



SRS Annual Report

It's been another busy, challenging but highly rewarding 12 months at SRS, and [our 2017-18 Annual Report](#) is out now, with news, numbers, quotes and case studies from all our areas of work. It shows that over the last year:

- 1) We delivered 6329 individual contacts to refugees and asylum seekers from 37 countries
- 2) Including family members, we estimate that we helped more than 1100 people in total
- 3) A total of 100 people have now been resettled in Suffolk with our support under the government's resettlement programmes, the majority of them Syrian
- 4) We delivered more than 1500 employment support contacts, nearly twice as many as the previous year
- 5) We paid out almost £11,500 in individual financial assistance to prevent hardship or disadvantage
- 6) We currently have a total of around 85 volunteers who are actively engaged in nearly 20 different projects and areas of work
- 7) We gave more than 25 talks and presentations and featured 25 times in local newspapers, on radio and TV

Suffolk Refugee Support
Annual Report
2017-2018



Charity Manager's Report



I heard a comment recently from a Syrian teenager who had arrived in Ipswich under the Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Programme (which we are proud to be part of). He said "When the bombs go off, they told us to open our mouths." This was to prevent children's eardrums from bursting with the almighty noise of the bombs hitting their homes.

It is comments like this which drive home to me what incredible trauma and devastation SRS's clients have often come from. It is so easy to use the words "war", "conflict" and even "persecution" without fully understanding the real impact of these horrendous events on human beings.

Art Therapy Group

Recently we worked with the Golden Yew Project, a social enterprise aiming to improve mental health and wellbeing, on a Women's Art Therapy Group. Over a 4-week programme, 10 refugee women worked with an art psychotherapist, a psychotherapist and an artist using art materials, music and food to explore some of the participant's stories around safety, journeys and hopes. We're delighted that the resulting artwork will be displayed at our AGM this year (see page 1).



WEA Education and Training

Access to adult education for asylum seekers can be challenging, but recently we have been developing our partnership work with the WEA (Workers' Educational Association) across a range of courses. The WEA eligibility criteria has meant our asylum-seeking clients have been able to attend these courses free of charge, creating new opportunities for them to attain academic achievements and regain a sense of purpose while many face a long wait for a decision on their asylum application.

The WEA have delivered Beginners Computer Skills for ESOL learners, with eight women we support completing the course, covering basic skills from word documents to using search engines. They have also delivered an Introduction to First Aid for our clients, with all ten attendees passing, and are currently working with SRS on an accredited Entry Level 2 ESOL writing course for our students. We have selected students who need extra literacy support and the course runs for five hours twice a week. The WEA are also providing a tutor to work with a literacy group at the International Women's Group. Once again, the students have good spoken English, but sometimes struggle with reading and writing.

Refugee Resettlement Update

Over the last few weeks we have welcomed one more family and our first single refugee to arrive under the resettlement programmes. We have also seen another family successfully 'move on' from their initial accommodation, but we remain very keen to hear from any landlords who might consider renting a property to a resettled refugee family (see poster right).

We were thrilled that one of the resettled refugees we support had his recipe for Date Stuffed Ma'amoul included in the [Bake for Syria book](#) (see right). A big thank you to Friends of Refugees Suffolk for their support with this.

We also wanted to share with you these beautiful, poetic words given to us recently by one of our resettlement clients:

Life has taught me to make my heart a city, with houses filled with love and streets of tolerance. The most beautiful engineering work in life is the building of bridges of hope over the seas of desperation and deprivation and suffering which we have lived through. We have been welcomed to the United Kingdom by this lofty organisation in Ipswich town. Suffolk Refugee Support has supported us materially and raised our morale and they have provided us with the services we need from the bottom of their hearts. We are delighted and very glad in this beautiful country.



Could you make a real difference to a family who have been through so much?

Do you have a house to rent ?

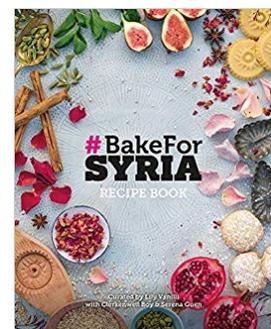
Would you consider renting your property to a refugee family and helping them to rebuild their lives in Suffolk?

The refugee families:

- Are in receipt of welfare benefits
- Have no history of rent arrears or anti-social behaviour.
- Receive support to manage their tenancies and financial affairs as a tenant.
- Have landlord references

Please contact:

Suffolk Refugee Support
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Mobile : 07415 934 154



Community Support & Donations

We're very grateful to Suffolk Libraries for their recent donation of numerous dual language books, which will be of great use to us across all our language teaching. We're also thankful to the Bloody Good Period project for helping to organise a donation of period supplies and toiletries for our clients, for many of whom this can be a difficult monthly expense to afford. Thank you also to all the other groups and individuals who have made such generous donations to our work.



SRS in the Media

We are delighted to have had our resettlement work [highlighted by the UNHCR](#)—this is fitting recognition for the hard work of our resettlement team and fabulous volunteers!

Our Hidden Harms work also featured recently in an [EADT report](#) on the Stay Safe Online initiative.

Finally, an asylum-seeking client from Egypt recently gave a powerful interview to BBC Radio Suffolk, describing why he was forced to claim asylum in the UK and what his situation has cost him. You can [listen to it here](#) [1:10:00 in].



We hope you've enjoyed our newsletter - we'd love to hear from you with 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, you can do so here: suffolkrefugee.org.uk/join-our-mailing-list/ or email us: office@suffolkrefugee.org.uk

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