



# Bradford Ecumenical Asylum CONCern

Registered Charity Number: 1119463

For this edition of our briefing, I'd like to introduce myself as Beacon's new coordinator and to thank Kezia Rooke for the excellent work she did during her tenure. I also want to thank Beacon's many volunteers who have gone above and beyond in this period of transition, not to mention Touchstone staff who have made me feel very welcome here.

I've worked to improve the lives of refugees and asylum seekers in both the US and UK, and I'm repeatedly impressed by the people of Bradford who dedicate themselves to this cause.

-Daniel Rosner



*This Easter, let us pray for...*

*All those who are seeking sanctuary in Bradford and the organisations working to support them.*

*Those who are disabled, yet are put into unsuitable housing.*

*Those who are ignored as they struggle to be understood in a foreign land.*

*And those who are alone.*



## News and Current Issues

### **Bradford Reaffirmed**

*(Will Sutcliffe)*

On 25<sup>th</sup> March, in front of a full Council meeting, Bradford's Lord Mayor received a certificate from the National City of Sanctuary movement reaffirming Bradford as a 'City of Sanctuary'. This followed a comprehensive review of the wide range of support in the city for asylum seekers and refugees. National CoS Coordinator Tiffy Allen commented: *"Within the national scene, Bradford is seen as a forerunner. When people talk about Bradford as a City of Sanctuary, there is a sense of respect, a sense of awe."*

**Beacon's CHAT, McKenzie Friends and Hosting Projects** were highlighted in the Bradford group's submission as great examples of how Bradford achieves the City



of Sanctuary aims of 'welcoming and including' those seeking sanctuary in the city.

For more information visit <http://www.cityofsanctuary.org/bradford> or email [chair@bradford.cityofsanctuary.org](mailto:chair@bradford.cityofsanctuary.org)

### **Syrian Crisis**

*(Daniel Rosner)*

As Lebanon's registered Syrian refugee count passes one million this month, Bradford is one of the few cities in the UK that has pledged to take on 50 of about 500 particularly vulnerable refugees to be resettled this year. Although the UK did not join the UNHCR programme to resettle 30,000 Syrian refugees, accepting the near 500 women, children, elderly, and victims of sexual abuse and torture is a step in the right direction, with Bradford leading by example.

In related news, Refugee Council, which delivered services to asylum seekers held at Angel Lodge prior to dispersal, has been replaced by Migrant Help. Beacon and related organisations are monitoring changes closely amidst concerns that Migrant Help may not deliver the same level of support. Migrant Help currently provides call-centre style support to asylum seekers.

## BEACON Briefing Easter 2013: Project Updates

### HOSTING Project

Just some of the achievements of past guests of the Hosting Project since we launched in 2008...

- Working as a University research assistant and illustrator
- Qualified as a barrister
- Running a barbershop
- Team manager with a cleaning company
- Reunited at last with his wife and 7 year old son



Without the support of our remarkable hosts and local agencies, they might still be destitute or worse. *And yet...* we are still desperately short of local households willing to share their homes with those who have fled in desperation to the UK from their troubled homelands. Those who have opened their homes invariably speak of the many ways they have been personally blessed through doing so. *Could you, or someone you know, open your home and heart to a destitute asylum seeker?*

**Contact: Will Sutcliffe, Hosting Project Coordinator at [host.beacon@yahoo.com](mailto:host.beacon@yahoo.com) or 07505 053149**

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### McKenzie Friends

Our McKenzie Friends volunteers are working hard to provide support to those with no legal representation. We continue to receive referrals from a variety of organisations and our volunteers have recently been supporting clients from outside of Bradford. Interested in volunteering? We hope to hold the next training session in June (dates to be confirmed).

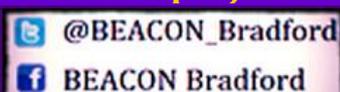
**Contact: Eithne Dodwell, Chair of McKenzie Friends at [eithne.dodwell@gmail.com](mailto:eithne.dodwell@gmail.com)**

**CHAT (Care & Hospitality At Thornbury)** CHAT is now well established working within Phoenix House to provide tea, coffee, and friendly support to service users. Court staff continue to demonstrate their respect and gratitude for CHAT's services, and to help us overcome any technical obstacles we have encountered. CHAT Spotlight is ever growing, with new faces appearing most weeks. Using a combination of games, discussion, and language exercises, we work to build participants' language skills and confidence. In March, we were deeply saddened by the passing away of a member of our team, Michael Mebrahtu. I know that his kind and generous spirit will be missed by all.

Exciting news for CHAT is that a new CHAT Coordinator has been appointed. Becky Burch will be taking up the post from May, at which time I will leave my role to begin full-time teacher training. Becky has a wealth of experience and I'm sure will bring about great developments to CHAT's service!

-Eleanor Wood

**Keep up to date with all the news from our projects:**



**Contact: Becky Burch, CHAT Coordinator at [chat@beaconbradford.org](mailto:chat@beaconbradford.org)**

We're raising funds so we can continue our work supporting some of the most vulnerable people in the UK. Check out our page to see how your contribution could help make a great difference:

**[www.localgiving.com/BEACON](http://www.localgiving.com/BEACON)**



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