



Hundreds attended the Leeds launch

THE JOURNEY BEGINS...

The evening of Thursday 11th November 2010 saw hundreds of people from all walks of life unite to mark the launch of our aim for Leeds to become a City of Sanctuary.

Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal, founder of the national City of Sanctuary movement, addressed the event and spoke on the importance of offering and finding sanctuary. He also wished Leeds well as it starts out on its journey to becoming a recognised City of Sanctuary.

Before the event, nearly 300 individuals and 70 organisations had already pledged their support to the movement, each making a promise to do something that will make Leeds a more welcoming and fair place for people fleeing war or persecution. At the event itself many more signed up their support.

Fabian Hamilton MP who publicly signed his support on the night, spoke movingly of his grandparents finding safety in the UK after fleeing Nazi Germany.

"My promise will be to continue giving the best political support I can to those who've come to seek sanctuary here; to make sure that bureaucracy doesn't cause them to despair, and to actually allow them to become part of society." - Fabian Hamilton MP

Daniella Smith, the newly crowned Miss Africa Yorkshire also lent her support, saying that she hoped to use her title to promote awareness of people seeking safety in Leeds.

Bishop of Ripon and Leeds, John Packer, also declared his support, and spoke about how welcoming others to our city can have a positive impact on the life of the city.

Many more messages of support came from all quarters of the city including Leeds City Council, Costco, the Co-op, Princes foods, from university students and from mosques, churches, synagogues, gurdwaras, temples and many more.

Since the launch hundreds more individual supporters have signed their personal pledges to make Leeds a City of Sanctuary, and many more organisations have looked to what they can do to help integrate and welcome refugees and asylums seekers into Leeds life. We hope this newsletter gives a flavour of progress so far.

Leeds CITY OF SANCTUARY

Please stay in touch.

Visit the website:

www.cityofsanctuary.org/leeds

Follow us on Twitter:

@leeds-cityof-sanc

Join our Facebook group:

Leeds City of Sanctuary

E-mail us:

leeds@cityofsanctuary.org

Or write to us:

Leeds City of Sanctuary

233-237 Roundhay Road

Leeds, LS8 4HS

Welcome:

Welcome to our first Leeds City of Sanctuary newsletter. We are delighted to see how the idea of City of Sanctuary has captured so many imaginations, hearts and minds across the city. We wanted to share with everyone some of the progress we have made in the first few months of our journey.

Dates for your diary:

Thursday 31st March 2011

ICE AND FIRE: ASYLUM DIALOGUES

St George's Centre, LS1. 11am - 3pm.

Monday 30th May 2011 (bank holiday)

ONE LOVE, ONE LEEDS

Mariners Centre, LS11. 1pm until 9pm.



Hassan and Said



Sethu and Dorcas

Universities of Sanctuary

Universities of Sanctuary is a group of Leeds academics and students meeting to promote the ideals of City of Sanctuary to university departments, student societies and individuals who work or study in the higher education sector in Leeds.

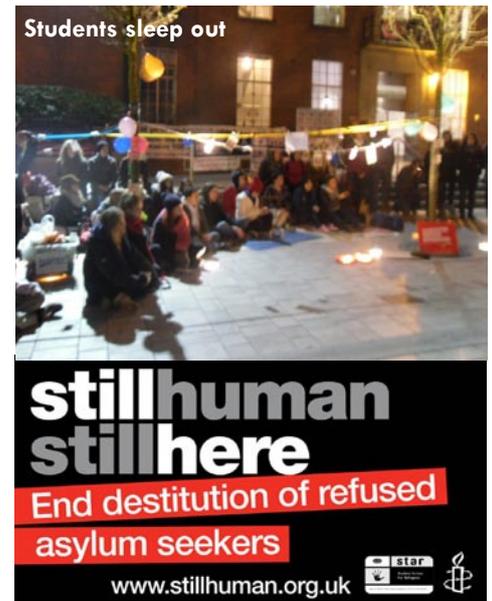
Early success has included the University of Leeds Department of French signing the City of Sanctuary pledge and supporting the development of student-led language exchange between students of French and French-speaking refugees and asylum seekers.

Leeds University also has a very active student society, the Student Action for Refugees (STAR). STAR looks at opportunities where students

can support refugees and asylum seekers: both practically and through awareness raising.

In February, STAR teamed up with Amnesty International to highlight the "Still Here, Still Human" campaign. This seeks to raise awareness of the destitution of asylum seekers in Leeds and across the country, and call for the Government to review the right to work for people seeking asylum.

The campaign launched at Leeds Town Hall, and was supported by more than 70 people. This was followed by an all night "sleepout" by 50 people outside the Leeds University Union. They collected letters and petition signatures to be sent to all Leeds' MPs.



Anyone who wishes to get involved in Universities of Sanctuary should contact group convener Jemma Russell on tr07jr@leeds.ac.uk.

Faiths for Sanctuary

People and congregations from many different faith groups in Leeds are responding enthusiastically to the City of Sanctuary movement. The basic idea of welcoming strangers and exiles is common to all faiths. The year began with a vibrant event hosted by Sinai Synagogue. Over 120 people including the Lord Mayor from more than ten Jewish, Christian and Muslim faith communities gathered to explore ways of becoming more involved with City of Sanctuary.

Through presentations and interviews, they learned more about the asylum process and the experience of refugees. The room hummed with conversation as people got to know each other, and each others' communities. All discussed what they and their communities could do to make Leeds into a City of Sanctuary. As a follow-on from this event, awareness raising events were held in the Civic Hall, hosted by Amnesty International and Leeds City of Sanctuary.

faith, was a visit by the youth St. Vincent de Paul (SVP) group from St Mary's in Horsforth, to PAFRAS. PAFRAS provides essential food parcels and support for people who have no other means to support themselves.

One mum said of her son's visit: "It will be an experience he will never forget. I am pleased because his understanding and acceptance of asylum seekers is now much greater than many adults I meet. As a mum, thank you for that."

Groups are currently arranging welcome events to be hosted at their place of worship, while other initiatives are being co-run by people from different religious backgrounds.

One great example of practical support offered by people of

It is exciting to see the ways that the sanctuary movement is helping us to focus on bridges and commonalities rather than barriers and differences. For info on how faith groups are supporting City of Sanctuary: leeds@cityofsanctuary.org



SCHOOLS OF SANCTUARY

Leeds Schools of Sanctuary acknowledges and celebrates schools that are committed to welcoming and supporting people seeking sanctuary.

A number of schools are on their way to becoming the first Leeds "Schools of Sanctuary". They became involved for a variety of reasons.



St. Mary's, Horsforth

Emabit from Ethiopia read "The Colour of Home" about a refugee boy in an English school

Hovingham Primary School has a number of children from very vulnerable backgrounds, including asylum seekers and refugees. The whole school works hard to welcome them into the school community.

The school's Race Equality Council met recently to plan their involvement in Schools of Sanctuary. Assistant Head, Elisabeth Bullamore-Brown explained: "It seems sensible to network with other such school that are looking to raise awareness of sanctuary. It is also beneficial to be part of a larger community that is working towards a common goal across the city."

Hovingham are currently helping an experienced teacher who is now a refugee in Leeds to gain UK classroom experience. Staff and pupils are happy to be involved with Schools of Sanctuary, as working with and welcoming with refugees and asylum seekers is a regular part of life at Hovingham.

Shadwell Primary School have also begun working towards their School of Sanctuary status. One pupil there felt it important that "the children understand, as our school is mostly [white British]"

Students there wrote and delivered a presentation to their School Council on refugees and asylum seekers, and are in the process of discussing next steps. School Council and the senior management team are supporting.

Students at **Shire Oak Primary School** have been working on classroom projects related to



St. Mary's, Horsforth

Mrs. Cape from the Philippines taught the children a traditional Filipino nursery rhyme

sanctuary and refugees, and contributed an excellent display to the launch. The school is currently hosting an overseas teacher as a voluntary classroom assistant and they have previously engaged refugee speakers from RETAS to talk with pupils.



St. Mary's, Horsforth

Sethu showed the children a traditional Zimbabwean dance

Bramley St Peter's School recently arranged training for their staff on discrimination and hate crime. They are also reviewing their procedures at school for welcoming international new arrivals, and hope to develop a buddy system to support children who come to the school from overseas.

St Mary's Primary in Horforth showed their support for Schools of Sanctuary during Book Week – which celebrates books from around the world. Refugees Sethu, Emabit and Aisha along with Mrs Cape went into school to share with the children stories rhymes and music from their home countries and cultures.

- Edward Ralston and Rose McCarthy

How to become a School of Sanctuary:

- * All Leeds schools are invited to get involved. There are full instructions about what to do on the website: www.cityofsanctuary.org/leeds/schools
- * Schools simply need to read the notes and downloadable guidelines, notify us of their interest and then get started on meeting three simple principles. The notes are full of suggested actions to meet each principle, plus ideas about the kind of evidence to submit.
- * Schools submit the evidence to the Schools of Sanctuary group, who will present qualifying schools with a School of Sanctuary certificate. We will make the first presentations of certificates during Refugee Week 2011. To find out more, e-mail: schools@cityofsanctuary.org



Leeds Welcomes...

The Leeds Welcome Meeting aims to give new refugees and asylum seekers an opportunity to meet together, with easy access to numerous agencies and services in a welcoming environment.

Services include housing, legal advice, education, training, employment, English classes, family tracing services and befriending. Leeds Welcomes aims to reach people who are new to Leeds and make sure that they can access basic services as well as make new friends and know where they can get help. To find out more, contact: chrisbrooks@retasleeds.org.uk



LEEDS: proud to welcome people seeking safety



Leeds City of Sanctuary presents an opportunity to meet new people, share stories, learn new skills, and (if you want) get involved with the Leeds City of Sanctuary movement.

ONE LOVE, ONE LEEDS

Monday 30th May 2011 (bank holiday)

1 pm until 9pm (rolling programme)

at the Mariners Centre, Dewsbury Road, Beeston LS11

(3-4 minutes walk from the Refugee Council)

BOOK YOUR FREE PLACE at: oneloveleeds.eventbrite.com



A fun, all-age day for 100s of people from every corner of Leeds - to work out how Leeds can grow to become a truly welcoming, inclusive city. Featuring: food, workshops, music, kids activities, conversation, games and sport, networking, and much more.

Please put the date in your diary - we'd love to see you there! Or get in touch if you want to volunteer and help run it:

leeds@cityofsanctuary.org

SUPPORTERS



Thank you to everyone who has so far signed their pledge of support to making Leeds a City of Sanctuary. We would love more of you to sign up, by visiting: www.cityofsanctuary.org

INDIVIDUALS:

652

ORGANISATIONS:

137



Leeds
CITY OF SANCTUARY

To find out more about:

Schools:

schools@cityofsanctuary.org

Universities:

tr07jr@leeds.ac.uk

Volunteering:

rhiannon@cityofsanctuary.org

Inter-faith:

pippabrook@hotmail.com

Health:

abbe.sanctuary@gmail.com

Leeds Welcomes:

chrisbrooks@retasleeds.org.uk

www.cityofsanctuary.org/leeds