



**West End Refugee Service**

*strength through support*

**Issue 54 July 2013**



Welcome to the July edition of the WERS newsletter!

### **WERS' hardship fund**

It is estimated that around 200 asylum seekers are living in Newcastle without any statutory support. Some have been destitute for over 4 years. Since 1999 WERS has operated a hardship fund and the support of destitute asylum seekers has continued to be an important part of WERS' work.

WERS is currently supporting 105 destitute men and women. The weekly outgoing of £1,575 presents an enormous fundraising challenge for the charity and WERS is struggling to meet the continuous heavy demand on the fund.

Although it has never run out in the last 14 years, the fund is worrying low and we are asking for your help to make sure that WERS can continue to provide this vital support for its destitute clients.

### **How you can help**

- **Set up a monthly standing order**
- **Send a one-off donation**
- **Donate some toiletries**
- **Be inspired to organise or support a fundraising event like WERS supporter Clive Davies.....**

*"A group of us are doing a bike ride in early October to raise funds for WERS. The bike ride is about 75 miles over two days, which for some of us, may be a bit of a pain! We last did this ride over 20 years ago to support Nicaragua. This time, we are getting back on our bikes to support people a bit closer to home, who ironically, are from all over the world!"*

*Our Just Giving website is at:  
[www.justgiving.com/cycle4wers](http://www.justgiving.com/cycle4wers)  
Please sponsor us!*

*We are being very generously supported by  
M. Steel Cycles in Gosforth.*

**Or our latest initiative.....**

### **BAGS OF SUPPORT FOR WERS!**



**There is now a brilliant WERS shopping bag!**

Available in a long handled (as pictured) or short handled style, this attractive jute bag has the WERS logo and strapline on one side and the WERS web address on the other.

Be a walking advert for WERS while you do your shopping or go to the beach!

All profit from the bags will go to the hardship fund supporting destitute asylum seekers.

Bags cost £6 and if you wish to receive the bag by post, postage and package is £3. Give us a ring or drop us an email now to order your bag.

Why not put in a bulk order and sell the bags at your workplace or place of worship?

# Refugee Week



17-23  
June  
2013

Refugee Week is a UK-wide programme of arts, cultural and educational events and activities that celebrates the contribution of refugees to the UK and promotes a better understanding of why people seek sanctuary.

As usual WERS staff and volunteers were involved in a variety of activities and events. The annual awareness-raising stall in Grainger Market was a success with over 1000 free pens and mythbusters given out to passers-by. It was great to have some live music this year courtesy of musicians from Crossings who performed at intervals throughout the day.

A number of schools invited WERS to give assemblies and lessons to different year groups. Ali and Lindsay were kept busy visiting Dame Allan's Schools, Joseph Swan Academy, Emmanuel College, Corbridge Middle School and Queen Elizabeth High School in Hexham.

Ali's story has a profound effect on young people and it is most moving to read and listen to their feedback from these sessions. A student from one school wrote:

*"Dear Mr Ali*

*You recently came into school to talk to us about your life experience and I would like to say thank you for sharing this with us. I was very interested by what you told us and it meant a lot to me. I found it very inspiring and it proved to me that you can get through anything in life if you are strong enough. I found it amazing that you had survived everything and now live a normal life, It has shown me how insignificant our everyday worries are, living such a privileged life. I personally can't imagine being able to cope with what you have been through and it has inspired me to be positive and strong in any difficulties I now have to face....."*

## Recent Funding successes

Since the last newsletter, we've had the great news of two new awards:

A further grant of £30,000 from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and a £25,000 award from J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust. WERS thanks these funders very much for their continuing support of its work.

## WERS Befriending Scheme photographic project



Final year Sunderland University photographic student Nick Hurren worked with a number of WERS befriender pairs producing a series of wonderful portraits.

We all went down to the finalists' show at Sunderland University and it was fantastic to see the images as part of the exhibition.

Lindsay Cross

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