The Porch Newsletter Autumn 2018

Cowley Road Carnival

Homeless members of our centre, including those in our Art group, took part in this summer's Cowley Road Carnival. Members and staff displayed a selection of colourful flower pots painted by the Art group and showcased our Porch Preserves jams. The pots and plants were donated by Bicycle Blooms, and paint donated by Annie Sloan on Cowley Road.

Members helped staff and volunteers with planning and running the carnival stall. They engaged with members of the public around the issue of homelessness, telling their stories and the role The Porch played in their life. The event was a great collaborative effort bringing together different people involved with The Porch.

Trip to Weston Super Mare

Every summer we arrange an excursion to give our members the opportunity to take a break from their usual routines, and simply enjoy a trip to the beach.

This year ten members and staff visited Weston Super Mare. We attended the Sand Sculpture Festival before heading to the beach.

Afterwards we visited SeaQuarium and the promenades. Members walked along the Grand Pier and the arcades.

The day finished with fish and chips before returning to Oxford in the minibus, with members commenting on how much they enjoyed the day.

The Porch day centre
Helping the homeless and vulnerably housed

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

supported by www.oxford.gov.uk OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

www.theporch.org.uk 139 Magdalen Road Oxford OX4 1RL Tel: 01865 728545

Charity 1089612 Patron: Bishop Steven Croft Company 4271032

Safety awareness for homeless women

We co-facilitated the Freedom Programme with Oxford Domestic Abuse Services (ODAS) dealing with female victims and survivors of domestic and sexual abuse, which presently suffers a gap in services in Oxford.

For our vulnerable homeless members, we flagged up six safety alerts to Adult Safe Teams and successfully housed four female members through priority need.

'Had I not had The Porch to help me at the time they did, there would definitely have been a very different outcome' **Porch member**

Allen's Story

Allen (not his real name) was made redundant after 26 years with the same employer. He became unemployed and soon afterwards went into arrears with his rent. This led to his eviction from his flat and he ended up sleeping rough on the street.

Allen did not tell his family or friends about his situation, leading to social isolation, anxiety and being cut off from his family. He initially contacted The Porch day centre for a shower and a hot meal.

Attending the centre regularly and spending time with staff and volunteers allowed Allen to engage in the process of reintegration in society. We referred him to City Council, where he was verified as homeless with the right to access benefits and local services. Because safe accommodation was a priority we also secured him a room in a hostel.

Once accommodation was identified, we supported Allen with looking for work. We enrolled him in our weekly job club, where our job coach encouraged Allen to apply for a kitchen job in a university college. Allen spent a couple of days being trained in the college kitchen, after which he was offered a job.

During the period from Allen's contact with The Porch to finding a job, his mental wellbeing improved. His social skills also increased, leading to better relationships with other people. Overall he says he now feels less stress and anxiety. Allen is now in a shared accommodation and working full time in the kitchen of the university college.

Harvest

Every autumn, The Porch begins to gather in food, clothes and toiletries collected on our behalf by churches, schools and individuals during Harvest celebrations.

These donations mean a lot to us. It keeps our café and kitchen functioning during the winter months to provide meals for our homeless members.

For this year's appeal we would particularly welcome the following: sugar, coffee, tea, hot chocolate, orange/fruit squash, Angel Delight, cake mix, rice pudding (tins or dry), cooking oil, stock cubes, gravy granules, flour, spices, tins/sardines, disposable razors, deodorant, toiletries, mens' underwear and socks, and washing powder.

Members and staff making apple juice for Harvest Lunch

Please call 01865 251798 or email us at guy@theporch.org.uk if you would like to donate. Thank you.

Centre news

We welcomed new project worker Jason (right) and grow worker Ian (left) to the centre.

The Radcliffe Orchestra's Summer Concert raised £1,000 in aid of the centre. Our thanks to Radcliffe Orchestra and also to the Rotary Club of Oxford for providing volunteers on the night.

Our Building Appeal is active! Please see www.theporch.org.uk/the-porch-appeal or email alex@theporch.org.uk if you would like more information.

'Staff are willing to help you fill in forms and have chats and give you advice and give you confidence' **Porch member**

Porch Preserves

We have expanded the outlets where we sell jams and preserves that our volunteer, Nicola, makes at our kitchen, sometimes with help from our members. These range from caravan club sites, delicatessens, garden centres, farmers' markets, church fairs and summer fetes.

We also try to sell at charity events such as at Save the Children, MIND and Hearing Dogs. Our jams have been sold too at Cowley Road Carnival, Eton Community Fair at Winsor, and they have even been taken to France and Ireland. In this way the message of homelessness has been spread far and wide.

The Porch Patron, Bishop Steven Croft, with volunteer Nicola at St Michael and All Angels' Church

Interested in volunteering?

We welcome volunteers at the centre, especially those with a skill that they can use with our members. This can involve listening to members, helping in the kitchen or going on trips with members. If you would like to volunteer, please contact guy@theporch.org.uk.

School students helping the homeless

During the summer we partnered with National Community Service (NCS) to raise awareness of the homeless sector.

This involved a series of youth fundraising campaigns that included selling Porch Preserve jams at Gloucester Green market, a sponsored swim, a sponsored canal walk, and donations of food and clothes. These raised over £2,000 for The Porch. Our thanks to NCS and to all the young people who took part.

Making the Most of Your Gift to The Porch Day Centre

Make a donation: We have to fundraise every penny. Your donation, however small, is greatly appreciated, so thank you for contributing to The Porch. If you are a tax payer, please complete the Gift Aid section, as it increases the value of your gift to us.

One-off gifts are always very welcome. However, standing orders provide us with a backbone of income throughout the year. If you are able to support us in this way, please complete the standing order mandate (remembering to complete the Gift Aid section if you are a tax payer).

If you would like to discuss your donation or have questions about the funding of our work, please contact Alex Lipinski, fundraiser, at alex@theporch.org.uk or ring 01865 728545.

MAKE A DONATION

I would like to make a one-off donation:

£25 ☐ £50 ☐ £100 ☐ other £_____

(Cheques made payable to The Porch)

GIFT AID YOUR DONATION OR STANDING ORDER

I am a UK tax payer & would like to Gift Aid my donation.

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made:

☐ today ☐ in the past 4 years ☐ in the future

Please tick all boxes you wish to apply.

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year.
I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand The Porch will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

Donor's details

Title ---------- First name or initial(s) ----------

Surname ---------- Full home address ----------

---------- Postcode ----------

Signature ---------- Date ----------

Please notify The Porch *if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.*

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Return to: The Porch, 139 Magdalen Rd, Oxford OX4 1RL

The Porch

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