



CITY OF SANCTUARY

Coventry Update

Feb 2010: It's been a while since we updated all those who have signed up to City of Sanctuary, so here is some news of activities past, present and future.



Celebrating our first year:

On September 21st we had a big joint celebration of the anniversary of our launch, of Eid and of Peace One Day. Over 100 people attended the Lord Mayor's Parlour and we had a special focus on Darfur with displays, food and a talk by Amer Adam from the Darfur Community in Coventry. Antonio from Angola, Valerie from MacDonal Road Methodist Church and Annastasia from Zimbabwe all talked about City of Sanctuary and Beth talked about Peace One Day.

The picture (left) shows Beth and Annastasia.

Coventry Peace Festival:

You may have come across one of the many events connected with City of Sanctuary during the Peace Festival 1st-14th November: Story Telling, Chalking in Shelton Square and various pieces of Street Drama.

Throughout the festival we had displays in two shop windows with work by young people about what Sanctuary meant to them. Yardley Street painted their ideas on T-shirts and Year 9 pupils at Blue Coat School made paintings and sculptures which we later photographed and made into calendars. They sold like hot cakes! (See an example below)



Welcome in Practice:

We are currently running a project in partnership with NHS Coventry to make GP surgeries more welcoming to those seeking sanctuary. It runs from January until September and involves asking both GPs and refugees what problems they face and then helping refugees understand the system better and GPs understand refugee issues.

This may mean training for surgery staff in speaking with people with limited English, use of interpreters and so on.

Hate Crime:

Hate crime hurts and is widespread but people usually tell no-one. Even the hate crime reporting centres in places like the Refugee Centre get few complaints. The City of Sanctuary Working Group has set up a small group, mainly of refugees, to look at what would help people to report hate crime. It is hoped this would enable them to share their experiences and provide a clearer understanding of what was happening in the City.

Culture:

Culture is a wide concept and includes heritage, the arts and the way people live and interact. The arts can get us thinking in new ways. A Culture Group has been meeting regularly to share ideas and good practice. One piece of work is to make the bus station and the train station more welcoming and we have had a couple of stalls at Pool Meadow with some useful feedback from the public.

International Women's Day (March 8th):

As part of the Women's Festival there will be a City of Sanctuary banner-making session on Sunday 7th March between 2pm and 4pm at the Peace House (address below - everyone welcome).

On Saturday 6th March between 2pm and 4pm, at the Transport Museum, you can see Anastasia getting a Woman of Achievement Award!

Refugee Week (13-19th June 2010): Web Site:

We are planning events now. One is an art exhibition all week in the Glass House opposite the Herbert - contact us if you know any refugee artists who would like to submit work. Another is a big party in the park on Sunday 13th June - we haven't decided which park yet but get it in your diary!

The national City of Sanctuary web-site has been rebuilt recently and we are currently updating our Coventry section.

The movement started in Sheffield and their local news is very interesting.

Access it at: www.cityofsanctuary.org.uk

Big Lunch - Sunday 18th July:

All over the country communities will be getting together for street parties and similar events as a way of getting to know each other better and to celebrate our common humanity. It is a wonderful opportunity to welcome newcomers to your area or organisation.

food
friends
fun

Pledges of support for City of Sanctuary since the last newsletter:

Akimbo	Cheylesmore Community Centre
Wood End Family Project	Christ the King Justice and Peace Group
Coventry Women's Forum	Coventry Jesus Centre
Carriers of Hope	St. Columba's URC
Coventry Heritage and Arts Trust	Wyken URC
Coventry Amnesty International	Barnacle Methodist Church
Voluntary Action Coventry	Earlsdon Methodist Church
Safe In The City	Precious Blood and All Souls Catholic Church
Coventry Multi-Faith Forum	Holy Trinity Church
Grapevine	St. Catherine's Church
Acacia Catering	St. Barbara's Church
Imagineer	St. Andrew's Church
Craven Connection	Westwood Church
Stoke Heath Community Centre	Keresley Village Community Church
Allesley Park Community Association	St. Chad's Church

Please let us know about what you are doing to make your organisation more welcoming. Sharing ideas inspires others!

Contact Penny: Coventry Peace House, 311, Stoney Stanton Road, CV6 5DS
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