



# Brushstrokes

## Community Project

December 2023



*Merry  
Christmas & A Happy  
New Year!*

Every year we see Christmas being celebrated and preparations begin early, as early as October. With shops selling Christmas trees and decorations, chocolates and jumpers, mince pies and much more. Yes Christmas is certainly a busy time, but where does it originate?

It is vital that we never forget the very humble beginning of this great celebration, with the visit by the Angel Gabriel to a young woman in a town called Nazareth in Galilee in The Holy Land, with a message that this young woman named Mary would conceive and give birth to the Son of God, who would be called Jesus and would be great (Luke 1, 26-38). This visit from the Angel Gabriel was followed by a time of great trial for Mary and her husband Joseph with a long journey to Joseph's home town while Mary was expecting the birth of her child, only to find there was no room for them to stay anywhere in Bethlehem other than in a stable. So there the child was born and Mary wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger. What followed were visitations from the lowliest and most humble of people, shepherds who came with their flocks and later three wise men who came to give the Son of God gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

As we think about the story of Christmas we think about the work of Brushstrokes, with its humble origin set up to help the needy of Smethwick. Today it is a thriving community project helping refugees and asylum seekers, just like Jesus and his parents would become in their own lives. It gives people hope in times of difficulty and provides them with basic necessities: food, clothing and furniture helping them to be comfortable and sustained in their lives. It works with those who have made the long journey from their homelands to start a new life in Britain. It is a project that helps all people and is welcoming to anyone who comes seeking help. Just like the beauty of Christmas which is a message of love and peace to all, so Brushstrokes is a mission that reaches out to all sharing, love and goodwill to anyone who is in need.

So as we celebrate Christmas this year, let us be glad for all that we have. Let us be thankful for the hope given to us by the work of Brushstrokes and for the peace and love given by God,



by sending his Son to be born and live among us. May the true meaning of Christmas resonate with us through the love and kindness of all at Brushstrokes in bringing hope in times of difficulty, support in times of need and peace in times of uncertainty.

Reflection By : Michael Furey and Carmine Rea  
(St. Mary's Seminary )



# Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year!

During this season, we reflect on the profound message, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." In the past year, we have witnessed firsthand the prevailing negativity surrounding migration. However, through simple acts of kindness, generosity, and hospitality, ordinary individuals have joined forces to bring light and hope to those who have chosen to make our community their home.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our funders, dedicated volunteers, and the organizations that have collaborated with us over the past year. Your support has empowered us to extend a warm welcome and provide assistance to newcomers. On behalf of the entire staff team and management committee, we express our sincere wishes for a joyous Christmas. We eagerly anticipate continuing our collaborative efforts with you, ensuring that we can sustain a welcoming environment for new arrivals in the year 2024.

Warm regards,

Dave Newall  
Project Manager



Wishing you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas filled with joy, warmth, and cherished moments. May the holiday season bring you peace and happiness, and may the New Year be filled with prosperity, good health, and countless opportunities. Here's to a festive season of love, laughter, and shared celebrations. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!







# MERRY CHRISTMAS



We had a wonderful time at Brushstrokes during our Christmas present distribution festivities. Many families, including numerous excited children, attended the event across three designated time slots. They enjoyed festive snacks, drinks, and music while eagerly anticipating their special visit from Father Christmas.

Our photos capture the joyous atmosphere, with plenty of smiling faces. This successful event wouldn't have been possible without the collaborative effort of all areas of Brushstrokes. The broader Brushstrokes community generously contributed a significant amount of donations. Our dedicated staff and volunteers spent hours wrapping presents, sacrificing their weekends during this busy time of the year to ensure that our families had a delightful and gift-filled Christmas.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed and helped make this event a success!



# MERRY CHRISTMAS



Christmas Gifts  
Party







I am Funom Makama. I am a health inclusion worker with Brushstrokes. My role is ensuring that Asylum Seekers and Refugees in the Asylum Accommodation are supported in any health-related way, by assisting them to register for a GP, a dentist and helping with HC2 certificate application. I also give advice on understanding the NHS and ways to maintain or improve on mental wellbeing. I am also a blood donation advocate, assisting the NHS to raise awareness, especially among the minority communities.

Thank you.



Mohammed Al-Shameri

We are delighted to extend a warm welcome to our newest addition, the Health and Inclusion Worker and Community Engagement Worker at Brushstrokes. As we embrace these valuable team members, we look forward to the positive contributions, dedication, and expertise they will bring to our organisation.

Mr Makama's role as a Health and Inclusion Worker aligns seamlessly with our commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for all. Together, we aim to enhance the well-being and inclusion of our community members, and Mr Al-Shameri's , role as a Community Engagement worker, We eagerly anticipate the valuable contributions and positive impact that Mr Al-Shameri will bring to our community-focused initiatives.

Please join us in welcoming New Health and Inclusion worker Mr Funom Makama and Mr Mohammed Al-Shameri to the Brushstrokes family. We are excited about the journey ahead and the positive impact we will create together.

Warm regards,  
Brushstrokes Staff



# WELCOME





# REPRESENTATIVE! VOLUNTEER

Hello everyone!

My name is Cecilia. I'm Brushstrokes' new volunteer representative. My role includes hearing the volunteers' voices and seeking their views. I also give them feedback from the committee meetings.

I'm originally from Brazil. There I studied Journalism. In England I studied English Literature. My first language is Portuguese. I'm a qualified teacher of English, from the University of Cambridge. I also know some Spanish and Arabic.

We are soon approaching 'the most wonderful time of the year'!

Christmas is very special to me. It reminds me of the time I spent with my family. I wouldn't be who I am without my father's love and support, who has always been my best friend, believer in me and teacher. He taught me nothing is impossible once you set your mind on it and put all your effort into it. And that a disadvantaged background shouldn't be a barrier for the attainment of utmost success.

I also dedicate my achievements to my children, the reason for my every breath.

I merrily wish you and your families a Christmas and festive season filled with love, happiness and prosperity! As Dale Evans said: "Every time we love, every time we give, it's Christmas."

I respect all faiths, races and backgrounds. We are all humans and that's what makes Brushstrokes so special. Here everyone is treated with dignity and respect. At Brushstrokes we are one big family, which represents our closely knitted community.

I'm absolutely passionate about the work of Brushstrokes and the core values we all share in common and live by. These are: to seek excellence, to challenge injustice, to work with people's strengths, to be compassionate, inclusive, respectful and collaborative.

Father Hudson's unique and groundbreaking vision, which was first implemented in 1902, allowed us to do what we do today. Everyday Brushstrokes' staff and volunteers work tirelessly to help and support our clients. I'm sure challenges lie ahead however with our skilled, proactive and positive approach, we will endeavour to find solutions to every problem.

Please do feel free to reach out if you need anything or have anything you'd like to say. I'll do my best to assist you.

Do keep warm and safe!

Yours truly,

*Cecilia*



# Congratulations



Lorraine & Hawar



Parveen & Dave

**Congratulations to Hawar, Lorraine, and Parveen on receiving their 5-year Long Service Awards! Their unwavering dedication and commitment to serving at Brushstrokes are truly commendable. We cannot express enough appreciation for their hard work and the positive impact they have made on our organisation. Thank you for five years of outstanding service and contributions. Here's to many more years of success and collaboration!**

**Brushstrokes Staff Member, Martin McNally, Celebrates 10 years of continued service.**



**Pictured : Martin McNally "Volunteer Coordinator" and Archbishop Bernard Longley**

**During an Advent Service of Reflection, Father Hudson's Care, recognised it's many staff members who had worked for 5, 10, 15 and 20 years of continued service. We are pleased that our very own Volunteer Coordinator, Martin McNally, was presented with a Long Service award from The Archbishop Of Birmingham, Bernard Longley. Martin confirmed that he "Can not believe it has been 10 years. Time does fly when you love your work." A big THANK YOU goes out to Martin for all his years of service.**



# Poem for the month of December!

In December's hush, a whispered tale,  
A frosty dance, a winter's veil.  
Beneath the moon's soft, silvery glow,  
A world adorned in a glistening snow.

Twinkling lights in streets aglow,  
A symphony of carols, soft and low.  
Beneath the evergreen, a gift in store,  
A season's magic, forevermore.

Fireside warmth, a cozy embrace,  
Families gathered, love to trace.  
A December moon, a radiant sphere,  
Whispers of joy, drawing near.

Muffled footsteps in the snow,  
Nature's lullaby in moonlight's show.  
Silent wishes in the crisp night air,  
December's grace, beyond compare.

As winter weaves its tapestry bold,  
Stories of the year, in echoes told.  
December, a chapter in time's embrace,  
A poetic pause, a moment's grace.

## Quote of the month

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service  
of others." - Mahatma Gandhi





# SERVICE USER PANEL'S CHRISTMAS BRING & SHARE



## FRIDAY 22ND DECEMBER

## 12PM - 2:30PM

## MUSIC FROM BABAK AT 1:30PM

BABAK WILL BE PERFORMING THE TRADITIONAL IRANIAN INSTRUMENT, THE TANBOUR

EVERYONE'S  
WELCOME

ANY QUESTIONS  
07827 258 680





# CHRISTMAS CLOSURE

**Closed** 12pm Friday 22nd December

**Reopening** 9am Tuesday 2nd January





**Contact us:**

**Brushstrokes Community Project**

253 High Street,

Smethwick,

B66 3NJ

Phone: 0121 565 2234

E-mail: [info@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk](mailto:info@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk)

Website: [www.brushstrokessandwell.org.uk](http://www.brushstrokessandwell.org.uk)

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