



Messenger

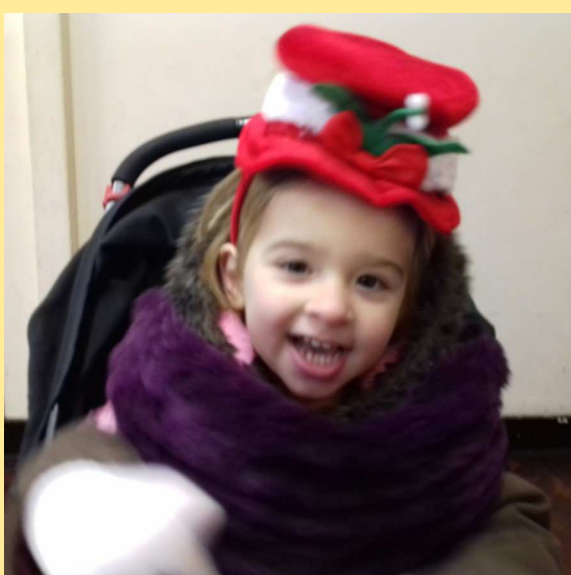
January 2018

Brushstrokes Community Project wishes everyone
a happy, healthy and safe 2018.

*You crown the year with Your goodness,
and Your paths drip abundance.*

Psalms 65:10-12

**Happy
New Year
2018**



It would be improper of us to start the new year with an expression of anything other than thanks. Thank you to all our volunteers, friends, neighbours, donors, and absolutely everyone who has been on our side throughout 2017 as well as dedicated members of staff and management. You are all part of the Brushstrokes family and without your committed efforts our work of helping to meet the needs and challenges facing people in difficult situations would prove impossible.

This special New Year's edition of our newsletter features photographs from our Christmas parties as well as acknowledges everyone's kind donations. We try to respond to the generosity of as many individuals and organisations as possible but it is inevitable that in the busyness of our activities a few names may have been forgotten. We ask for your forgiveness.

Every gift to Brushstrokes, no matter how small, is appreciated, recorded and given out to the most vulnerable people across our communities in Sandwell, South Birmingham and the Black Country. We have encountered some outstandingly kind people this past year of every age, status and background who, perhaps despite personal hardships in the present economic climate, have thought of somebody else. And in making someone else feel a little more special and valuable you have demonstrated how immensely valuable you are too. Thank you all.

It was lovely to be visited in December by the West Bromwich Albion Foundation. Many thanks to Dave Lawrence and the team of young people who came to us as part of their 'Random Acts of Kindness' project. Special acknowledgement to Emily, Sam and Katie for your hard work helping us to distribute bags of food to families in need. Happy 2018 to all involved with your organisation and thank you again for your ongoing support.



We owe massive debts of thanks to the following schools for amazing Harvest Festival gifts:

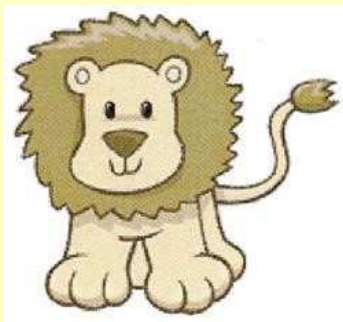
St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School, Oldbury

St. Mark's Catholic Primary School, Hampstead

St Philip's Catholic Primary School, Smethwick

St John Bosco Roman Catholic Primary School, West Bromwich

All items of harvest food have now been passed out to vulnerable people in need. Thank you.



Thank you so much to Miss Tallon and all the staff and children of Abbey Roman Catholic School, Erdington for the beautifully wrapped toys you donated to Brushstrokes. We appreciate your kindness very much.



Grateful thanks to Ahmed of Human Appeal, Birmingham, for donating 90 jackets and coats to Brushstrokes. These will be offered to anyone in need of warm outdoor clothing this winter.



KEEP CALM — AND CHECK OUT BRUSHSTROKES' NEW WEBSITE!

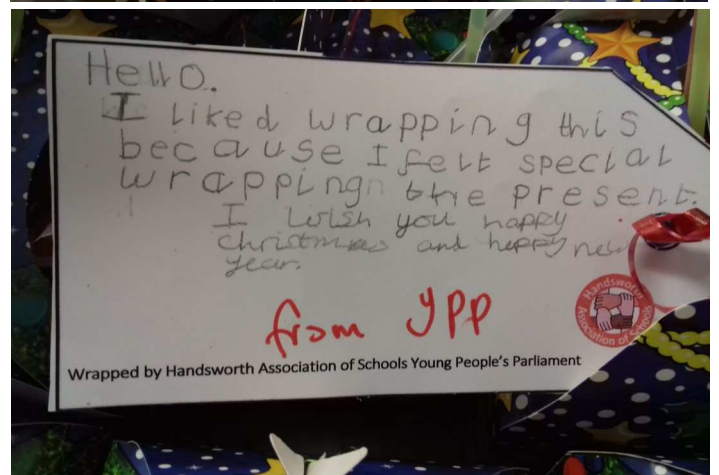
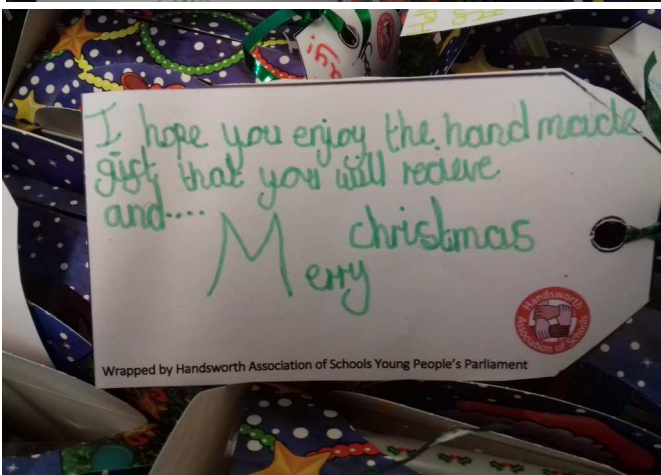
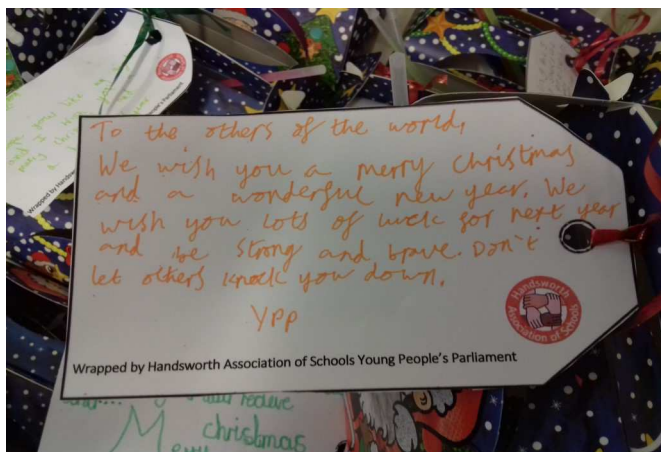
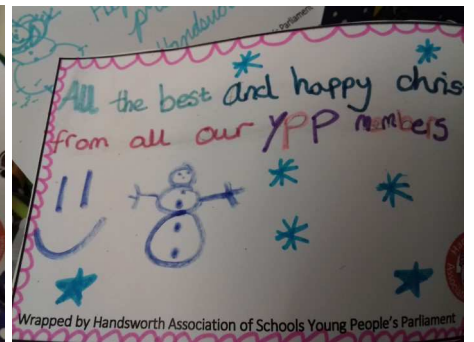
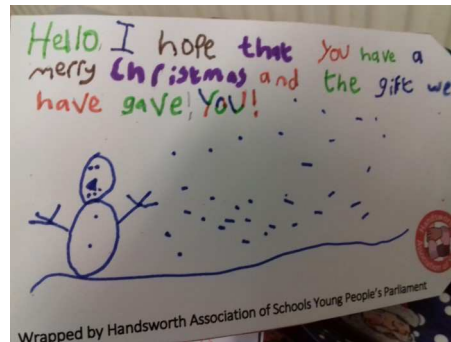
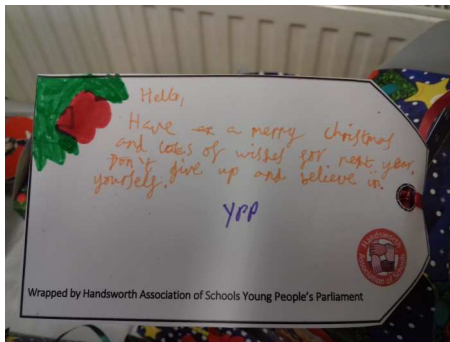


Yes, it's finally arrived and it has really been worth waiting for. Please take a look at the new Brushstrokes web site at:

www.brushstrokessandwell.org.uk

Sincere thanks to Roy Gardiner and Andrene Miller for lending us their expertise and extreme hard work in getting the site prepared for us. We are sure you will agree that it presents Brushstrokes in a very professional light. Please feel free to comment on it and suggest any improvements.

Huge thanks to Deborah Bonnique of the Handsworth Association of Schools and their Young People's Parliament project for their generous donation of baby packs and presents for our children's Christmas parties. It was wonderful to receive a visit from pupils from St Michael's Primary, Welford Primary, Cherry Orchard and Lamb's Christian Schools and we were extremely moved, not only by the generosity of the gifts but more especially by the labels, beautifully handwritten by members of the YPP to vulnerable children whom they may never meet. Each gift has now been given to a child in need here in Sandwell and Birmingham, and in total Brushstrokes handed out a staggering 900 gifts across the Christmas period!



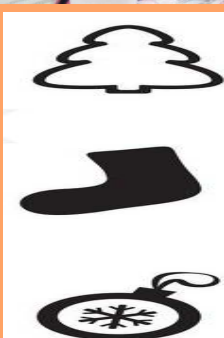


at Brushstrokes





at Brushstrokes



Brushstrokes volunteers, Asha, Steluta and Junior proudly receive Food Safety certificates from Martin and Jo at the Staff and Volunteers Christmas Party. These skills will enable them to help safely prepare, and serve food at Brushstrokes social events and the Community Café as well as being a useful qualification to add to their CVs. If you would like to become a Brushstrokes volunteer with responsibilities for handling food please contact Martin on 0121 565 2234.





at Brushstrokes



THANKS



It was so nice to be here. *Henry*

It was all very nice. *Floralis*

We were really happy to see Santa.
Thank you. *Adeola*



[You have done] amazing work! *Amanda*



Welcome to BetterOff Sandwell

BetterOff is a service for people who live in Sandwell.
BetterOff will show you the benefits you are entitled to and will help you
to apply for them online.
BetterOff also provides information on how to find and apply for jobs.

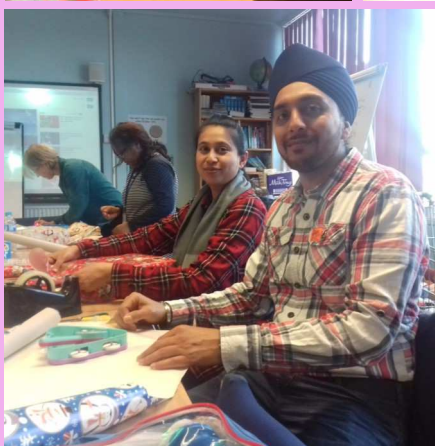
www.sandwell.betteroff.org.uk

**thank
you**

MASSIVE thanks to the team of little helpers from A.F. Blakemore Retail, Willenhall, for wrapping donated toys and gifts which were given out by Santa at the Brushstrokes Christmas parties! Thank you Claudette, Sam, Elaine, Alex, Caroline, Gurneet and Hannah. The team also gave Brushstrokes £250's worth of gifts. Thank you to A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd's charitable trust, the Blakemore Foundation, who funded this amazing donation. We are very grateful.



Hugest appreciation also to the group of gift wrappers from Nishkam Help, Handsworth, for helping us prepare toys for distribution at Christmas. Jas, Taz, Amrit, Rupa, Chetanjit, Kehar, Indy, Raj and Ari, were joined by our own volunteers, Sara, Asha and Halima and made a tremendous contribution. Nishkam also gave us masses of teabags and toys too. The team worked extremely hard all day long. Thank you so much.



We acknowledge the work of Frances Kenwick, Community Engagement Manager at Business in the Community, for organising voluntary teams of gift wrappers at Brushstrokes.



A great big THANK YOU to the team of volunteers from Mondelez who pitched in to help us wrap gifts in December. It was great to meet Simi, Grace and Deepti and we are grateful to all at Mondelez for your generosity.

**Happy
Wrappers**





Happy birthday to Mohammed whose special day was celebrated with cake at the Brushstrokes Community Café on Friday 8th December 2017.



Thank you to Lizzy Cragg from the Birmingham Opera Company for delivering a singing workshop at Brushstrokes Community Café and for running a community recruitment drive for their large scale production of a brand new opera taking place in Birmingham in March 2018. Rehearsals begin in January. Get in touch and register your interest now! No previous experience needed. Telephone 07793257537.



If you had called Brushstrokes over the Christmas period you would have heard the lovely answerphone message made for us by Megan's daughter, Julia. Thank you, Julia, for helping us, and being the informative and reassuring voice of Brushstrokes Community Project. Happy New Year to Brushstrokes' BEST EVER helper!

Contact us:

Brushstrokes Community Project
St Philip's Parish Centre
Watt Street (off Messenger Road)
Smethwick, B66 3DA

Phone: 0121 565 2234

E-mail: info@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk

Website: www.brushstrokessandwell.org.uk

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TDS
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Charity no. 512992

Parish of St Philip Neri

