

Brushstrokes Messenger

father
Hudson's
Care

"We must be in the hand of God like a brush in the hand of the painter"

Nicolas Barré

Oct 2021

A very warm WELCOME to the Afghan families



'People have left behind their homes and families, and everything they have known, so they are incredibly traumatised and in need of emotional support' here at Brushstrokes we arranged gathering for some of the families placed in hotel in Sandwell, we arranged food and activities there was music where the Afghan men enjoyed performing an Afghan dance for entertainment and as a thank you gesture.

Huge thanks to Keydi and her daughter for their commitment to welcoming new Afghan families to Sandwell and for the time they spent preparing and doing crafts with children last Saturday.
One of the new arrived families enjoying a meal as part of our welcome to Sandwell.



“Jane, we want to pay tribute to you and recognise the gift that you have been to Brushstrokes over the 10 years that you have been with us. The project exists to welcome and give individuals the time they need to get the support or to grow in confidence.

Your willingness to go many extra miles, to give to others with patience, care and time embodies what Brushstrokes and our work should be about. You have been the heart of Brushstrokes and brought so much to so many, ensuring that our language provision is so much more than helping people to develop their English.

Your willingness to give people time, to foster relationships with staff, volunteers and students has left a huge legacy and as a brush in the hand of the painter, so you have through your life and work have created a masterpiece in Sandwell.

You are hugely respected in the field and with our partners, have single-handedly created a national exemplar for IELTS and OET with our friends in the NHS, giving so much hope and support to countless refugee and migrant health professionals and benefiting the wider community. Your influence amongst other ESOL providers and the generosity with which you share your knowledge and learning with other local groups has been wonderful to witness.

“Miss Jane.....” will echo down the streets of Smethwick whenever you pass by, you have become family and been welcomed into so many families, having given people the gift of speech, helped them into work, looked in on and out for those who you knew to be particularly vulnerable, through COVID and at other times.

Your support and mentoring for student teachers and volunteers has inspired many to move on to ESOL teaching roles and you are going to be such a hard act to follow. In the words of the blessed Beyonce
 “Your irreplaceable.”

“Christians are called not just to welcome Christ the stranger but also to imitate Christ the welcomer”, (Volf and McAnnally-Linz) you have done this in bucketloads Jane, thank you.

We all want to wish you a very happy semi-retirement, you deserve it.”

Dave and the Team



Migrant Help



Brushstrokes played matchmaker this month, bringing together Sameera, the Community Liaison Officer of Migrant Help, with several members of our service user panel. Eight of our panel members came well prepared with a series of questions that they were eager to ask Sameera regarding their situation, alongside other issues that were affecting asylum seekers and refugees connected to Brushstrokes. A variety of topics were covered during the session, including the challenges faced to accessing higher education and training opportunities, effective ways to report housing issues to the housing provider, SERCO, the role that Migrant Help can play in supporting asylum seekers, and accessing

travel support. During our meeting, Ali, one of the members of the service user panel also shared with us the great news that he'd just received confirmation of his refugee status. We look forward to inviting Sameera back to Brushstrokes in the near future.



Service user panel meeting

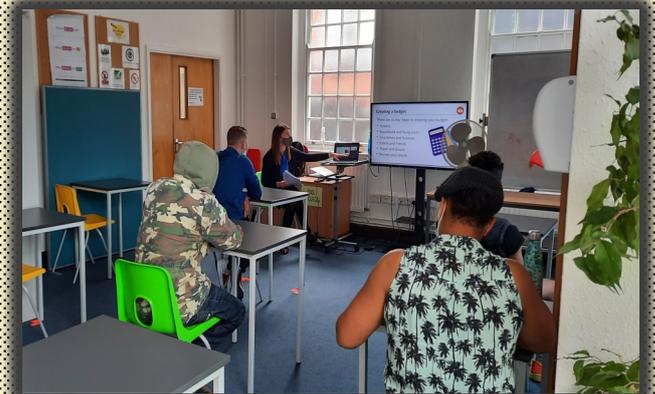
This month saw our latest service user panel meeting at Brushstrokes, and as evident in the photo, a great sense of energy and positivity was generated. These regular meetings give our service users the opportunity to express their thoughts, concerns and ideas in an open environment to the Brushstrokes team. It provides us with valuable feedback with respect to the day-to-day issues that asylum seekers, refugees and new migrants face, and how Brushstrokes can play a role to express these at a local, regional or national level. We had a healthy turn out of panel members and covered topics such as the issues that our service users wish to address during this month's meeting with Migrant Help, new social activities that could benefit our service users, and plans for an upcoming bring & share event. One of our aims is to broaden the composition of our service user panel group to ensure that it reflects the communities that we support at Brushstrokes, so we'll keep you updated with its development. A big thank you to all the service users (Anouar, Angela, Anita, Mohamad, Sayed, Rafat, Sarbaz, Qurrat and not forgetting Esther who joined via Zoom) and Brushstrokes staff (Lukano, Lorraine and Bryan) who were in attendance.

Facilitative Music Therapist

Have you ever felt moved by music? Heard a song that you really like and could not help but moving to the beat or singing along? Fridays at Brushstrokes are full of music! The training room next to the café has instruments to play and space for you to join in. From 9.30 until 12pm, you can have a 1:1 session where we can sing and play songs together, you can bring your favourite music, we can write songs together or just make up some music on the spot! It's a space for you to explore all the different things we can do with music, and that can help with expressing ourselves, feeling more creative and in discover new aspects of ourselves.

From 12 to 2pm, there is a music wellbeing group running alongside the café, where everyone is welcome to join and sing, play an instrument, share a song, dance...and much more! Sharing music with a group can make you feel more connected with others and can allow you to express yourself in a different way.

I started running the music wellbeing sessions at Brushstrokes at the beginning of October, and it has been a great experience! People from all ages and from many different backgrounds are joining the sessions and bringing their favourite music, exploring the different instruments, singing, dancing, and sharing music with others. Having the open music group running alongside the café is also great, as it combines two things that I think go very well together - music and food! No musical experience is necessary, just pop in for as long as you like. I look forward to seeing you there! **Arianna**



Staff attended the Nationwide Fraud Workshop. The aim of the workshop was to minimise the impact of fraud and scams the public face on a regular basis. The workshop looked at identity fraud, phone spoofing scams, courier scams, dating scams etc.

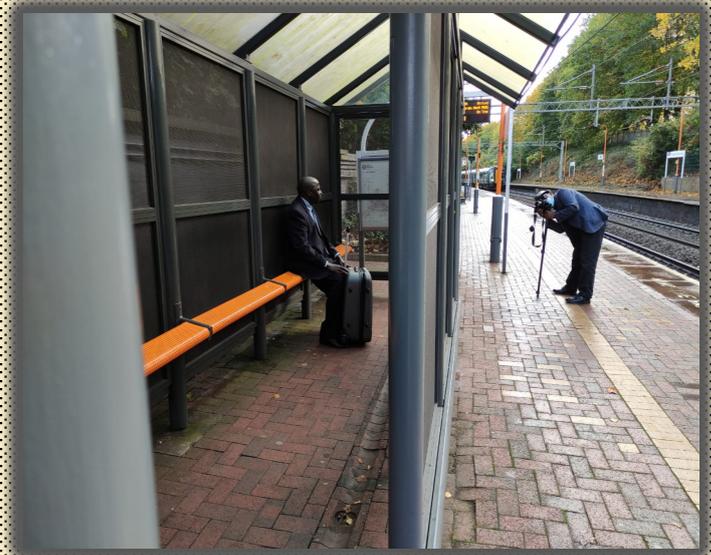


Vanley Burke is often described as the ‘Godfather of Black British Photography’, whereby his iconic images have captured the evolving cultural landscape, social change, and stimulated debate in the United Kingdom over the past four decades. He draws strength from remaining a humble man of the community, whose personable character allows him to capture the intimate and private nature of people’s everyday lives. Vanley visited brushstrokes this month as part of a photo project documenting migrants and their contribution to their new home, pictured here are our very own Nas and Lukano, Nas uses his bike to whiz around the city helping others in need, while Lukano fills his magic suitcase for educational items to donate to schools overseas.



Quote from Vanley

“You have to push the people at the top otherwise they won't know they are sitting on your head”!



Black History Month 2021

Vanley Burke migrant photography project

Tuesday 26 October | 10.30am - 12pm:

DETAILS: Ikon gallery, Migrant Voice and the University of Birmingham are working on a project with artist Vanley Burke, who will photograph Birmingham migrant residents and families. Join us at our coffee morning to learn more.

LOCATION: Saathi House, 49 Bevington Road, Aston, Birmingham B6 6HR

migrant VOICE SAATHI HOUSE Brushstrokes Community Project

Brushstrokes Appreciations

Nigar Koc; “Hawar helped me with benefits– Universal credit and housing”, “after Hawar found house for me”, “she come to view the house with me”. “Hawar is my God sent angel”, “she is like a blessed sister2, “I'm so happy Hawar helped me with everything”.





My name is Abdikarim Ali. I'm the new Employment Support Worker. My role is to provide employability support to our clients, including building a CV, job search, application assistance, soft skills and interview skills.

I have worked as an employment adviser for the last 9 years and I look forward to taking part in the great work taking place in Brushstrokes Community project.



An employee like you, intelligent, talented, and full of energy, is an asset for any company. Welcome to our company!

Hello, Bryan here! I'm delighted to say that I'm the Community Development Worker at Brushstrokes. Thanks to everyone who's been very welcoming since I began working here a few weeks' back. When I'm not busy at Brushstrokes I enjoy getting out and about travelling, cycling, walking and other antics in the fresh air. I'd best not say it too loudly in Sandwell, but I also enjoy spending time following the mighty Wolverhampton Wanderers. I look forward to supporting and collaborating with the many communities that we are fortunate to have on our doorstep here in Smethwick.



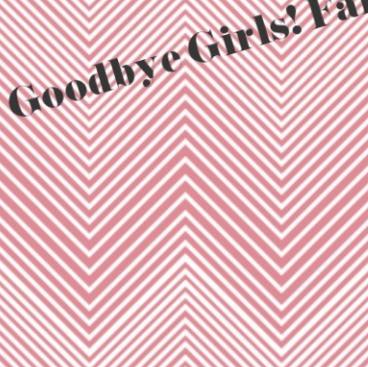
Ionut has made a huge impact on the EUSS project and been able to support a large number of Romanian clients and other EU nationals in his time with us. We wish him all the best for the future.

"Love the life you live. Live the life you love." Bob Marley.

Today it is my last day here in Brushstrokes and I want to say thanks to all of you and I really appreciated all you've done for me and all that you teach me.
In sign of appreciation,



"It's been a real pleasure working at Brushstrokes - I've really enjoyed my time here! A huge thank you to everyone for making me feel so welcome for the past few weeks, and especially to the immigration and advice team. I feel like I've learned so much in such a short time and I'd love to stay in touch and be part of the wider Brushstrokes community!" Rachel



"Thank you all for your continuing support and welcoming me into Brushstrokes and making me feel welcome and appreciated. Wishing you all the best and hoping to come back if funding allows ☐ See you soon! Marta

Thank You: To Tina and Her staff from Jericho Cleaners for completing a DEEP clean of our community kitchen.

In readiness for the opening of our Community Café the kitchen and washing room area needed a thorough deep clean. Following on from a recommendation we contacted Tina from a Community Social Enterprise called Jericho based in Balsall Heath. Tina confirmed that they could complete a deep clean and get the whole of our kitchen ready for the start up of our Community Café. Jericho cleaners did a fantastic job cleaning walls, floors, all surfaces and fridges.

Cooker Area Before



Cooker Area After



Wash Room Before



Wash Room Before



Jericho : *“Often the people we help just need a caring, supportive employer who will give them a chance to shine in work and in life. In some cases, the people we support have lived experience of homelessness, mental ill health, addiction, disability, modern slavery or the criminal justice system; in other cases they have struggled with the education system, experienced a difficult home life, or have low confidence and self-esteem.”*



Thank you to Tina Williams and the staff at Jericho

For getting our kitchen ready for our Café.

Pictured: Tina and Staff From Jericho

for more information see: www.jerichocleaning.uk



Amanda Amass and her team at Barratt Homes in Halesowen made a huge donation of rice, tomatoes, chick peas and cereal to restock our basic supplies. We are extremely grateful to Amanda for her continuous support of our needs and the way that she raises the awareness of the work we do here at Brushstrokes!



We were delighted to welcome Shobha from Laksh Community Group to our offices this month. Shobha and her fellow supporters have made donations of craft sets and laptops for the new arrivals from Afghanistan. These activities will help to keep the children busy whilst they await places in local schools, and enable families to begin to study as well as search for employment.

Contact us:

Brushstrokes Community Project

253 High Street,

Smethwick,

B66 3NJ

Phone: 0121 565 2234

E-mail: info@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk

Website: www.brushstrokessandwell.org.uk

Brushstrokes receives support from:



Charity no.
512992



Parish of St Philip Neri



Charity no.
234216



LOTTERY FUNDED



Sisters of our
Lady of Charity
of the Good
Shepherd

