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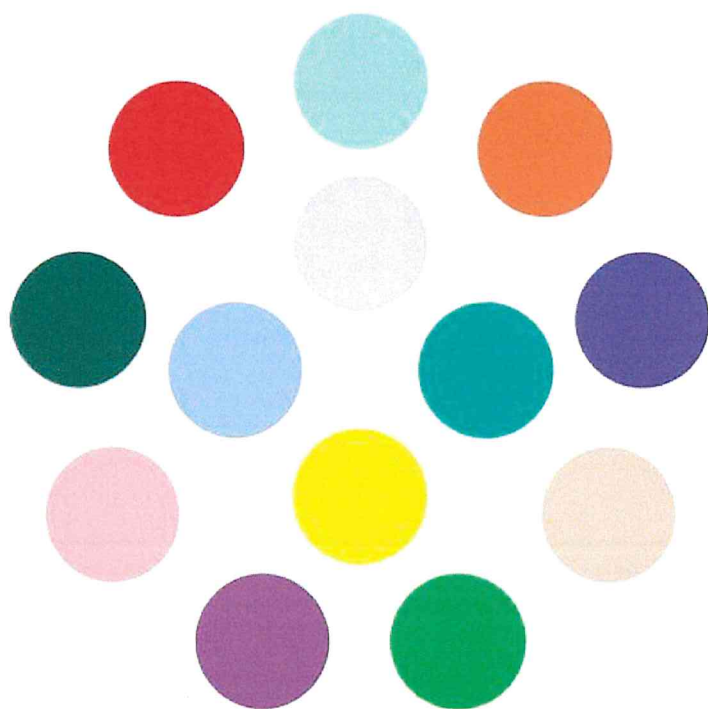
# Brushstrokes Community Project

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## MESSENGER

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JUNE 2022



### REFUGEE WEEK:

### 20-26 JUNE

Week beginning the 20th was Refugee week - an annual festival celebrating the contribution, creativity and resilience of refugees. Celebrated across the nation, this year's theme was on healing. Healing means recovering from a traumatic event, and being able to move onwards. No one understands that better than those who would have to leave their homes and pursue accommodation elsewhere. We hope that, through the events in which we at Brushstrokes have hosted, we are able to bring joy into peoples lives.

### THIS MONTH AT BRUSHSTROKES

- We hosted our annual AGM (All Groups Meeting), this was shared on Facebook, Zoom and in person, and we use AGMs to give people an overview of Brushstrokes and go over our impact on the community!
- We Celebrated Refugee Week!
- We took some service users on some exciting events!



*Jo Watters, our Head of Community Projects at Father Hudsons, speaking on behalf of Brushstrokes at our annual AGM, captured from our Facebook Livestream.*

# REFUGEE WEEK: DAYS 1 AND 2

## Share a Recipe & Community Walk



For the first 2 days of Refugee Week 2022, we hosted a Share a Recipe session as well as a Community Walk around the local area!

As a community project primarily working with Refugees and Migrants, Refugee week was a perfect excuse to host some inclusive events. For the first 2 days we hosted a cooking session and a walking session.

The cooking session went over how to prepare different forms of pasta, primarily Spaghetti Bolognese with some Garlic Bread. This event had a great turnout, and everyone was pleased with the food they had produced.

For the second event of the week, we hosted a Community walking session around the local area. We went through a chunk of Victoria park, and down to the nearby canals. The weather was gorgeous on this day so it made for a picturesque event, with all who came thoroughly enjoying it.



# REFUGEE WEEK: DAYS 3 AND 4



## Planting Session & Trip to the Library!

Day 3 of Refugee week we held a planting session. We had attendants plant seeds that will eventually grow into plants to liven up our makeshift garden. We are very much looking forward to seeing how our car park will blossom into something beautiful, with the help of everyone who has made planters and planted various things, we hope it'll showcase the talent we have in our Brushstrokes Community as well as spruce the place up a bit.



Day 4 of Refugee Week we took a group to visit Smethwick Library! Libraries are a great place to be involved in, obviously there are a lot of books both fiction and non fiction as well as informative on a wide variety of different topics, but also at Smethwick Library they host a pantry in which registered attendants can choose a few items of food to take home with them for free, this is very helpful for people on low income. While we were at Smethwick Library everyone got Library cards to signify both their kids and their own registration with the Library so they may visit in the future of their own accord.

# REFUGEE WEEK: DAYS 5 AND 6



On Day 5 of our Refugee Week celebration, we hosted our Community Cafe as normal, these are always a huge success, but this one stood out as the two people who oversee the volunteers weren't present this time. The event ran like a dream, with very few, if any hiccups for the entire duration. Following the cafe, we were blessed to be played some music from Arianna, who usually runs our Music Wellness sessions on a Friday at the same time as the cafe.



## 'Amend' Screening

On the Final day of our Refugee Week celebrations, we held a screening of the first episode of Amend, the Fight for America, as well as a post watch discussion about the themes and topics portrayed in the episode. The show is about Frederik Douglass escaping slavery, and going on to being a pivotal voice in calling for citizenship for Black Americans, a dream that would soon be realised in the 14th amendment. Following the screening we held a short discussion about what we watched, going over the themes of the episode and how it made us feel. Some of us spoke to feelings of empowerment, and realising the great actions of Frederik Douglass that were portrayed in the episode.



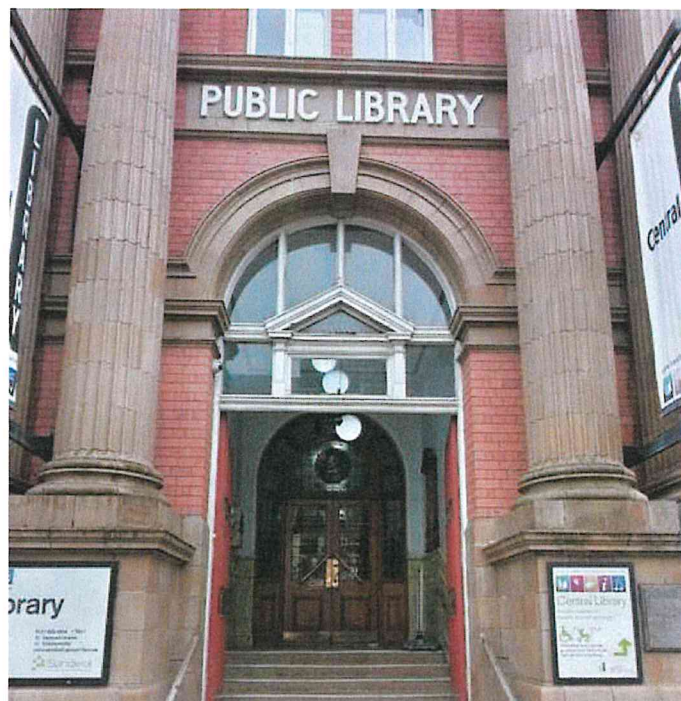
"I think you should all watch this movie, this is part of how our life changes, people realising that everyone should be equal" Irina Bilal aged 9



# UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM RESEARCH EVENT

On Saturday 25th June, we held an event with University of Birmingham. This was a great event shared by women and families who are part of Brushstrokes. It formed part of collaborative research between University of Birmingham and women in the asylum system experiencing food insecurity. The event was co-designed and involved a 'bring and share' theme. Women brought food from around the world and spoke about what that particular dish meant to them. At the same time, there were craft activities where women and children thought about what food meant to them - resulting in some thought provoking artwork!

The final part of the event came from a suggestion of creating a visual 'shopping list' where participants ticked off typical food bank food that they liked - then they gave further suggestions about which products they'd like to be available. Overall, it was a wonderful day and we shared fantastic food!



## ESOL LAUNCH : A HUGE SUCCESS!

***"At the beginning of June, an ESOL class started at West Bromwich library. It was set-up to serve the growing need of single men living in West Bromwich. They are unable to access Sandwell college and cannot travel to Brushstrokes due to the distance and lack of funds for travel.***

***The provision doesn't meet the need of all of the potential students but it is a good start. Attendance has been very good with class size varying between 7-12. Some of the students were able to attend an event at Brushstrokes during refugee week thanks to one off bus tickets being provided.***

***The classes have provided a small group with some much needed activity and a chance to practise their English in a nurturing environment to help them build their confidence. They have also had a chance to learn more about Brushstrokes and what we do." - Sonia Stranger, ESOL Coordinator***



# BRUSHSTROKES

## AGM

This month we held our annual AGM. AGMs (or All Group meetings) are times for us to share with everyone the work we do at Brushstrokes, how wide our charity has spread, how large of an impact we have had on the larger Brushstrokes community in Sandwell and to give thanks to members of staff and volunteers.

This event was also streamed live on Facebook as well as to some outside viewers on Zoom. This event can be viewed anytime on our Facebook. We had a good amount of different speakers, some of the volunteers told us what volunteering at Brushstrokes means to them, while some members of staff recapped the year gone by with some stats on how well we operated.



## CRICKET EVENT

*"It had always been a wish of Bryan and Nas to take our service users to a live cricket game at Edgbaston, especially those from Afghanistan who've been playing cricket throughout their lives. Service users and staff alike were delighted to be invited by Warwickshire Cricket Club to the local Derby, Birmingham Bears and Worcestershire Rapids. It was a great atmosphere, lots of great Cricket was played and everyone had a very enjoyable time. This was the first time many of our group have experienced a live Cricket match."*

*- Bryan, Community Development Worker.*

# FOOD BANKS BETTER TOGETHER

This month, we had support from Black Country Food Bank, Brass house Pantry, Smethwick Food Bank and Oldbury Food Bank. Working with these other groups was marvelous as it allowed us to double down on helping people because we had vastly increased stock, enabling us to give more to more people!



## VANLEY BURKE

### EXHIBIT

From the 18th to the 25th of June, we held our own little Vanley Burke exhibit at Brushstrokes!

The photos were nice to put up in reception as they portrayed the history of Birmingham, as well as showing people who came to our centre that we are a place of diversity here in Sandwell.



# Brushstrokes

## Community Project

*Strengthening and supporting refugees and migrants across Sandwell, West Birmingham and beyond*



*Are you interested in helping asylum seekers? Would you like to learn more about what can be done to help them? Then you may be the ideal person to become an **Asylum Guide** volunteer!*

*Why not come along to the Asylum Guide induction on **Thursday 30th June** and **Thurs 6th July** between **10am-2pm***

*(Refreshments will be provided) where we can explain how you can play a part in helping those that need some guidance?*



# Asylum Guides

For more information and to attend please contact  
[abqa@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk](mailto:abqa@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk)  
or phone 07570346848.



# Brushstrokes Community Project

*Strengthening and supporting refugees and migrants  
across Sandwell, West Birmingham and beyond*

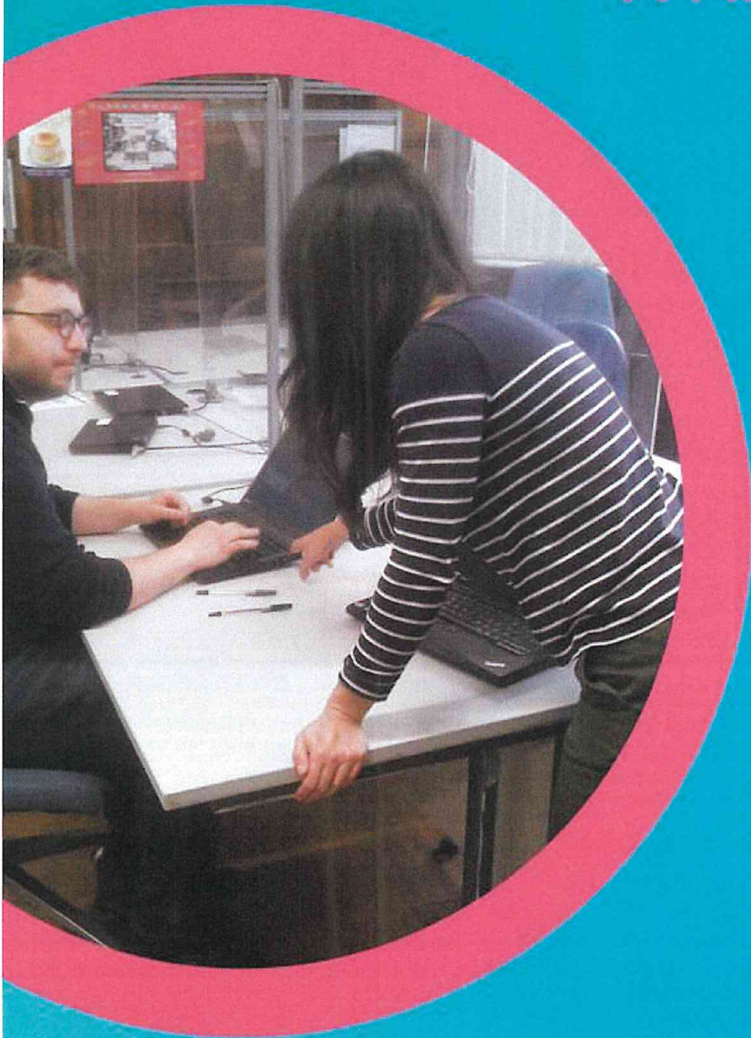
## DIGITAL SKILLS TRAINING

### WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

Improving your digital skills will allow you to effectively job search, learn how to read and respond to emails, how to browse the internet for information, check your online banking and more!

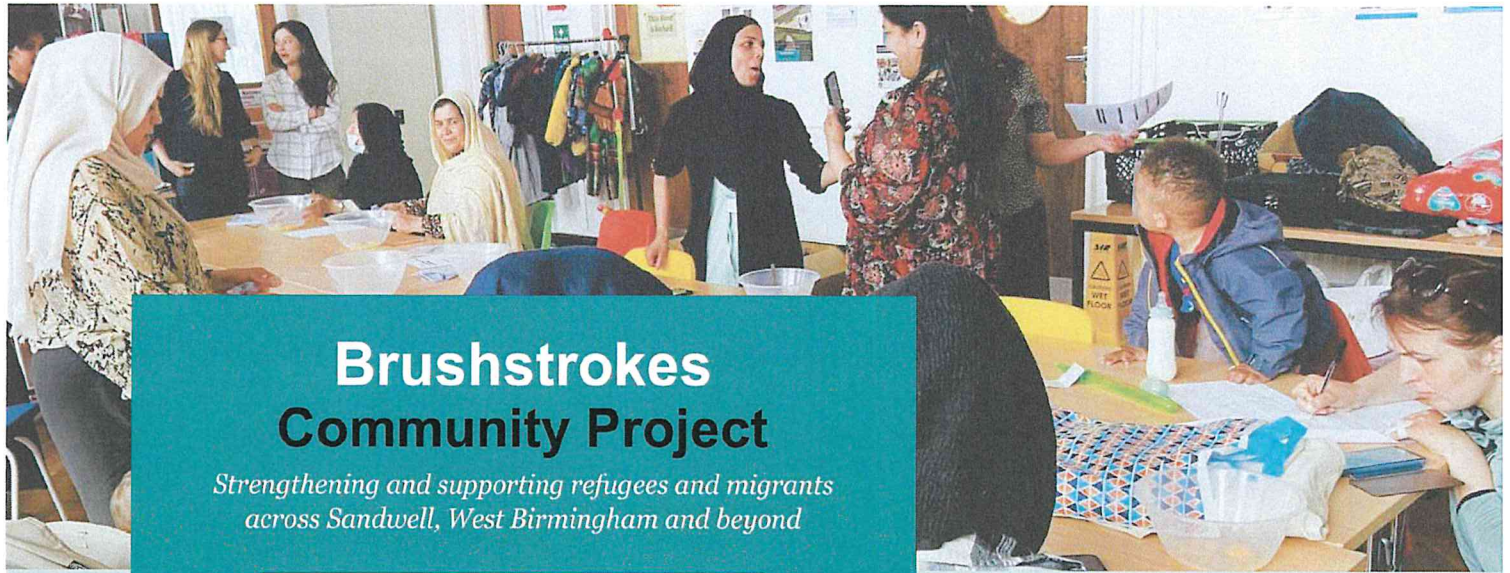
### WHERE WE ARE

253 High Street  
Smethwick  
B66 3NJ



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

please call us at  
0121 565 2234 or email us at  
[Qurrat@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk](mailto:Qurrat@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk)



# Brushstrokes Community Project

*Strengthening and supporting refugees and migrants  
across Sandwell, West Birmingham and beyond*

## Contact us:

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**REFUGEE ACTION**

**PLATER TRUST**

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 Lady of Charity  
 of the Good  
 Shepherd