

# 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

July 2018



Congratulations! Gratulacije! Felicitations and Urime! to Brushstrokes' wonderful family of volunteers who swept the board at the Sandwell Volunteer Awards in June 2018, scooping up armfuls of nominations and certificates.

Special mention must go to Henna Akhtar, aged 16, who was voted the overall winner of her category, 'Young Volunteer of the Year 2018' and to our very own Martin McNally, for riding off into the sunset with 'Volunteer Coordinator Of The Year 2018'!



Above: Work club and ESOL volunteer, Stephen Hardman, who picked up two awards, and Martin McNally.

Left is proud mum, Parveen with Henna.

Henna Akhtar, aged 16, who was presented with her award by former West Brom player Richard Sneekes and the Sandwell Mayor, Joy Edis, says, "I am really happy. I never expected to win anything. I have been volunteering for a year and a half at Brushstrokes where I sort clothes and give food to people who need it the most. It is rewarding to know you are making a difference in people's lives. I think more people should volunteer." Martin says, "We are all so proud of our volunteers and pleased that their many hours of work at Brushstrokes has been recognised."

Well done to Martin and the whole team of Brushstrokes volunteers, for their unceasing hard work, cheerfulness and commitment to the people we serve. Without your wonderful assistance it would be impossible for Brushstrokes to function as effectively as it does. We remain humbled by, and proud of, your dedication. Thank you.

Volunteers are vital for Brushstrokes to respond to the many needs within the local community and currently have a great team of 42 volunteers. There are many volunteering roles and opportunities with us including Administration, Catering, Housing, Outreach and Home Support, Resources and Teaching English.

If you would like to get involved in a current area of activity at Brushstrokes please call Martin on 0121 565 2234.



Brushstrokes volunteers at the Sandwell Volunteer Awards 2018. *Left to Right:* Hawar, Mary, Vivien, Diane, Lorraine, and Stephen.

**WE LOVE**  
OUR VOLUNTEERS



*Pictured above:* standing left to right are: Lorraine, Babatunde, Mary, Costacia, Diane, Vivien, Hawar, Alan, Parveen. Kneeling in front are Martin and Henna.

*Right:* Henna receives her award from Sandwell Mayor, Joy Edis.

Well done to ALL our nominated volunteers!



Sincere thanks to Tiana Rathod for her hard work in voluntarily teaching ESOL students here at Brushstrokes. Tiana leaves us to travel to Barcelona, Spain, where she will be living, and working as a teacher at an English language school. She leaves us with very fond memories and will be missed very much by her learners as well as by the Brushstrokes staff and volunteer teams. Pictured below is Tiana besides three of her happy class members and teaching colleague, John. We hope to see her again one day. 'Muchas gracias, Tiana. Hasta luego!'



### What's on at Brushstrokes

<p><b>Monday</b> ESOL; IELTS; Family Learning; Advice session: welfare rights and benefits (appointments only) Resources distribution (appointments only)</p> <p><b>Tuesday</b> ESOL; IELTS; Food distribution (1200 — 1500)</p> <p><b>Wednesday</b> ESOL; IELTS; Life in the UK; Work Club 1500 — 1700 (appointments only)</p>	<p>Resources distribution (appointments only)</p> <p><b>Thursday</b> ESOL; IELTS; Sewing class (0900 — 1100) Knit and Natter (1030 — 1230) Food distribution (1200 — 1500)</p> <p><b>Friday</b> Immigration drop in service (0900 — 1100) Community Café (1200 — 1400) Resources distribution (appointments only)</p>
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**Contact us:**  
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**Brushstrokes receives support from:**



### Out of Africa Research

Brushstrokes Community Project has been honoured to work alongside the United Nations Development Programme in carrying out important migrant-based research. We have been specifically identifying reasons why migrants leave the African continent and travel to Europe by irregular means, that is either over land or sea. The confidential research interviews have gone very well and we are grateful to all interviewees for taking part in this project. A full report on the findings of this study, which has been carried out in Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden as well as the United Kingdom, will be published in November 2018.



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*



We would like to give a very warm welcome to Carol Mendez, our new Monitoring and Administrative Officer. Carol comes to us from a background of working for other charities such as the Arts Council, Birmingham MIND and Royal Town Planning. She also has experience in education at a primary and secondary level in support roles such as office manager, school business manager and exams officer. This rich experience more than qualifies her to be involved at Brushstrokes where her busy role will include monitoring and analysing information to produce regular reports/



statistics, supporting the Project Manager in the preparation of evaluation and monitoring reports for funders and the management committee, setting up and/or improving systems for data capture for various areas of work, and (in her spare time!) carrying out general administrative duties for the project. When questioned about how she feels in her new position Carol replied, 'I'm loving it here'. We're glad you're here, Carol.



Congratulations and thank you to Martin and his team of catering volunteers for a tremendous effort at the 2018 'big lunch' at Brushstrokes. Close to 60 diners attended what was described as 'a great day!'

Martin says, 'Invites were posted through local doors, posters and emails sent and it was advertised in our newsletter. We had a great community party on the day. People brought food from all around the world including Albania, Turkey, Kurdistan, India and of course the UK. The Big Lunch is the UK's biggest annual get together for neighbours. It's a simple idea - that for a few glorious hours, neighbours come together to meet, greet, share, swap, sing, plan and laugh. We have joined in with this national project and use it as a great opportunity to bring together our local community from all around smethwick.'



'Hello, my name is Elsa and I am an Administration Volunteer at Brushstrokes. I also study Business Administration at Sandwell College. At Brushstrokes I help Carol and Nigel with general administration and reception duties every Wednesday. I am very happy here.'  
Welcome to the team, Elsa!

A huge Thank You to Greggs Bakers of Cape Hill, Smethwick, for your kindness in supplying Brushstrokes with surplus bread and pastries each week. This food has been very welcome in supplementing the diet of people on very limited incomes. Thank you to all the staff members for your cheerful generosity. We are very grateful.



### Kurdish Cooking Demonstration

Thank you to our fabulous team of volunteer Kurdish cooks who demonstrated their wonderful culinary skills at Brushstrokes on Tuesday 19th June. There was a captive audience who showed their appreciation of the team's efforts by cleaning every plate! Thank you to Susan, Hawar and Mzdha for cooking Shfta — a delicious lamb meat patty that is popular throughout Kurdistan and in Kurdish homes around the world.



Brushstrokes is delivering a new project in partnership with Refugee Action. We are proud to be the first organisation working with Refugee Action to deliver 'Asylum Guides'. The project aims to increase legal literacy, empowering people to be able to navigate and better engage with the complex asylum system. The Asylum Guides will provide information and guidance to asylum seekers on key stages of the asylum process who are living in Sandwell and West Birmingham.

Individuals wanting an asylum guide will be matched with our trained volunteers who will meet with them at key stages of the asylum process. We will also be able to take referrals from other organisations for asylum seekers who live in Sandwell and West Birmingham and would benefit from an Asylum Guide.

For more information or to make a referral please contact:  
[Blanka@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk](mailto:Blanka@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk) 0121 565 2234

Asylum Guides will receive in depth training, resources to deliver your sessions with your match and ongoing support from our Outreach Coordinator. If you would like to volunteer to become an asylum guide please contact:  
[martin@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk](mailto:martin@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk) 0121 55 2234

# REFUGEE ACTION

