

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

January 2019



Beautiful smiles all round at the Brushstrokes Staff and Volunteer Christmas party. Thank you to all our volunteers for such dedication and hard work throughout 2018.



A Warm Welcome to Danyal

My name is Danyal Zahir and I am currently a third year Aston University student studying Business Computing and IT. As part of my studies I have had to complete a placement and I have decided to volunteer at Brushstrokes. Working at Brushstrokes briefly has allowed me to meet some wonderful people who are very welcoming to everyone. I have previously volunteered at Hamilton School and at the British Heart Foundation. Volunteering at Hamilton School I mentored a school pupil with Autism Spectrum Disorder; I also volunteered to raise money for The British Heart Foundation. The skills and experience that I gained from volunteering I feel will be suitable at Brushstrokes. Some of my interests outside of university and work include, but are not limited to, maintaining an interest in technology and sports. Having a huge interest in technology has allowed me to gain the knowledge to build computers and keep up to date with all the new technology being developed. Thank you to everyone at Brushstrokes for such a warm and pleasant welcome.

Yours sincerely,
Danyal

Danyal is doing a grand job. assisting us with data inputting and other vital administration duties. Welcome to the team!

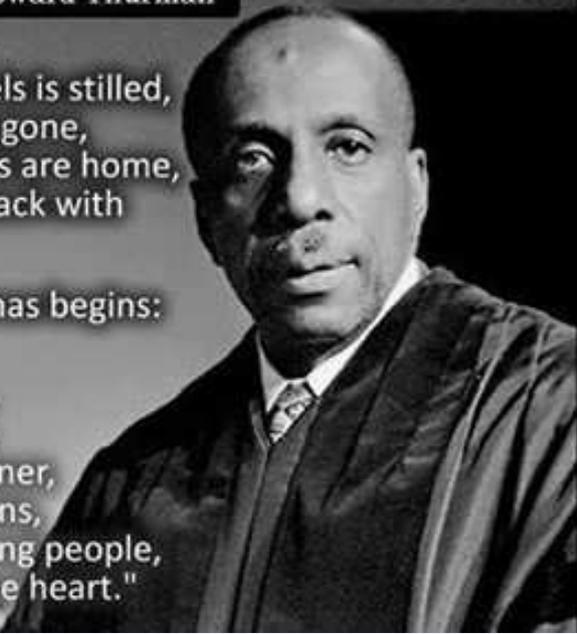


The Mood of Christmas by Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with
their flock,

The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among people,
To make music in the heart."



Howard Thurman (November 18, 1899 – April 10, 1981) was an influential African American author, philosopher, theologian, educator and civil rights leader. He was Dean of Chapel at Howard University and Boston University for more than two decades, wrote 21 books, and in 1944 helped found a multicultural church. Thurman, along with Mordecai Johnson and Vernon Johns, was considered one of the three greatest African-American preachers in the early 20th-century.

I received the beautiful poem above in a card sent by Maureen, one of our lovely ESOL teaching volunteers.

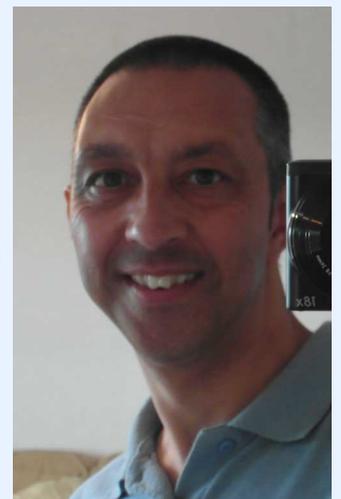
Christmas at Brushstrokes is always a hectic, grand and colourful affair but I believe that 2018's festivities surpassed all previous ones in terms of memories that will stay with me. It has been extremely humbling for us to receive toys and gifts from generous schools and organisations as well as individual donors and then to have the privilege of distributing these to children at our parties or hand delivering them to known families in our community. The sight of a ten-year old Iranian girl who had been in England for only one week literally jumping and clapping her hands with joy as Santa entered our Christmas hall will stay with me forever I think.

However, as always, continually swirling around and snapping at our preparations for a happy end of year celebration were serious real life problems for many of our service users which our staff and volunteer teams tirelessly wrestled with. These issues have included, amongst others, debt, poverty, addictions, domestic violence, unemployment, delays in welfare benefits, isolation, poor mental health, stress, and homelessness. And as before, the image of a father wiping away tears of gratitude after our advice and outreach team had worked successfully on behalf of him and his three young daughters, enabling them to remain in their home over the Christmas period will stay long with me. His interpreted statement that he had never before received such support from people melted our hearts.

Thank you to my staff and volunteer colleagues. We are a family, and as in all close families over the course of a year there can be tensions, tears, misunderstandings and disagreements. But ultimately there will be hugs, smiles and one will return to one's desk to find that a comforting cup of hot tea has mysteriously appeared. Team members regularly come into work early, finish late and carry out tasks in their own time. They seldom have a proper lunch break. A huge thank you also to our energetic manager, Dave Newall, who is accessible to us, supports us individually and steers the project through tricky waters. If you have ever visited us you will see that the state of our rented building is a little embarrassing. The fabric is crumbling, most equipment has been donated or purchased second hand, we have insufficient space in which to work and until late December we had been without an elevator for eight months due to lack of repair funds. But Brushstrokes Community Project is more than a physical building. Inside is a welcoming, compassionate, humorous, dedicated, respectful and accountable group of individuals striving to meet the needs of those in distress and I am immensely proud to tell people that I work there. It's not often that I myself write in this newsletter (which I edit) and still less do I use boastful adjectives, but I have to tell you all that the work we do to help improve or change people's lives is magnificent.

At Brushstrokes the tinsel and the tree have been put away for another year; the glitter has been swept up and thousands of toys have found happy new homes. Now, once again, the real work of Christmas begins. May I wish you all a safe and peaceful New Year.

Nigel Chandra
Centre Coordinator



Hi all the Brushstrokes team,

I would like to say a big Thank You for the support that you have provided over the year as well as previous years that I have accessed your service in regards to providing resources for the families I have worked with. I have been able to come to your service even at short notice where families have instantly become homeless; you have always been happy to provide food parcels, toys, toiletries, baby packs, clothes as well as friendly listening ear. I have also referred parents to ESOL. My role as a Family Support Worker has it's challenges and resources are limited throughout the city; I have always been able to rely on Brushstrokes' support to make a difference to the needs of the children, young people and families I work with.

Thank You once again. Merry Christmas.

Michelle
Senior Family Support Worker



To the completely and totally best kitchen group in the West Midlands, UK!
Team Leader Martin, Lucy, Nigel, and all the ladies and gents who help. But particularly all ladies in the kitchen and Martin, who is the best leader in the region!
Please, everyone, understand my infinite gratitude. You are all so kind and helpful. Health and prosperity to all your families.
Very best wishes,
Kenneth.

Thank you very much for our gifts — much appreciated by the two children — have a good break and all the best for 2019. Look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.
God bless you all
Vimla

Thank you so much for the presents. We have 2 very happy pupils who were overwhelmed by your generosity. Have a great Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone.
Kind regards
Asima
Deputy Principal
Oasis Academy Foundry



On behalf of Handsworth Association of Schools I would like to say a HUGE Thank You to Brushstrokes for the children's Christmas gifts. They were very much appreciated and well received by the children, who felt very special to have been chosen.

Christmas is such a special time but for some families it is also a difficult time and so opportunities like this where organisations can come together and do something positive to make a difference in their lives is a real privilege.

We look forward to working with you again

Wishing Brushstrokes, you and your team a blessed Christmas and New Year. Many Thanks

Deborah Bonnique
Project Engagement Co-ordinator
Handsworth Association of Schools

Thank you so much for our lovely gifts, they were very much appreciated and such a thoughtful sentiment. Wishing you all a lovely Christmas and a Happy new year.
Kind regards

Lindsay
Pastoral Support
Hamilton School



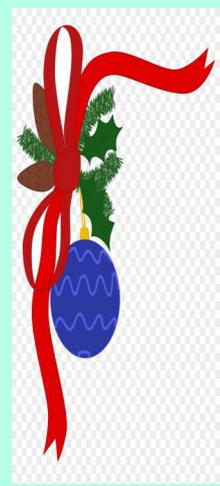
We are always very grateful for any feedback we receive as a result of our services. Any positive observations and acknowledgements or constructive criticism both motivates us towards excellence and helps us become more effective for our service users. Thank you to the above contributors whose kind comments are in turn relayed back to our supporters, management committee and funders.



Many thanks to Carol Mendez, Brushstrokes' Monitoring & Administrative Officer who also bakes and decorates cakes for special occasions in her free time. Carol has donated several cakes to good causes at the centre and contributed to our Christmas Staff and Volunteer party with this lovely Santa-themed cake. Carol says she is attracted to the artistic form of cake decoration and loves the pleasure that her creations bring to so many people.

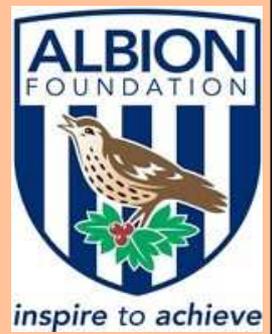








Many thanks to Macauley, Jake and Josh from the Albion Foundation, Smethwick, for delivering some sports training kit. We have several keen football-loving individuals amongst our client groups and these items will be distributed to them. Thank you to Dave Lawrence and all at the Foundation for supporting us continually. We wish you all a very successful 2019.



What's on at Brushstrokes 2018

Monday

Advice and Information 0900 — 1200: drop-in
 Advice session: welfare rights and benefits
 (appointments only)
 Resources distribution (appointments only)
 ESOL/IELTS classes

Tuesday

Food distribution (1200 — 1500)
 ESOL/IELTS classes
 IT class (1500 — 1650)

Wednesday

Advice and Information 0900 — 1200: drop-in
 Work Club 1500 — 1700 (appointments only)
 Resources distribution (appointments only)
 ESOL/IELTS/Life in the UK classes

Thursday

Food distribution (1200 — 1500)
 ESOL/IELTS classes

Friday

Immigration drop in service (0900 — 1100)
 Community Café (1200 — 1400)
 Resources distribution (appointments only)

Contact us:

Brushstrokes Community Project
 St Philips 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

Brushstrokes receives support from:



Charity no. 512992

Parish of St Philip Neri



FareShare FoodCloud



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 234216



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