



# CITY OF SANCTUARY

## Coventry, City of Sanctuary NEWSLETTER

Issue 2 June 09

### City of Sanctuary explained

City of Sanctuary is a people led movement to make Britain more welcoming to those who have come here as refugees in search of safety, and to other vulnerable migrants. Sheffield is the first City of Sanctuary and Coventry is well on the way to getting enough support to be recognised as a City of Sanctuary too. It is a continuing process and it actually makes the city more welcoming for everyone,

### Refugee Week

National Refugee Week always starts at the same time as the Positive Images Festival which Coventry has held for many years. There are lots of interesting events going on which provide a good opportunity for meeting people and for finding out more about other cultures, about why refugees come here and what their experience is like in Britain. Some of the highlights are :

**Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June** 7pm at Barrs Hills School -

'We share the same sky' by Banner Theatre

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June** 10am at the John White Centre - South Community Networking Event focussing on diversity

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June** :-

9am -5pm by the Godiva Statue - Escape to Safety experiential exhibition

2pm-8pm Cornerstone Centre - Cultures Alive - lots of activities

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June** 12.30 -2.30 Memorial Park car park - free car wash and food while watching a performance by stateless people

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June** 11am -3pm Coventry Peace House - litterpick, lunch and fairtrade football friendly

### Thank you

On May 12<sup>th</sup> refugees organised a thank you lunch for the year of support which Cllr Andy Matchet had given to the City of Sanctuary movement and to refugees in general while he had been Lord Mayor. They thanked him for his commitment to combat racism and to raise the profile of refugees in Coventry. The event was well covered by the Telegraph and created positive feelings all round.

### New Pledges Since The Last Newsletter

Coventry Refugee Centre

Burundi Orphans

Local Initiatives Foundation for Training

Coventry Blue Coat Secondary C of E School and Music College

Allesley WI

St. Elizabeth Justice and Peace Group

St. Thomas Church, Keresley

Coventry Quaker Meeting

St. Margaret's Church, Ball Hill

Foleshill Baptist Church

Coventry Trades Union Council

# POSITIVE ACTIONS FROM SOME OF THE GROUPS WHO HAVE SIGNED THE PLEDGE OF SUPPORT

**CSWP** - Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership are now providing myth busting material to all **employees** and making **refugee awareness** part of their induction process

**CTRIC** - Churches Together with Refugees in Coventry went on a demonstration "It was great when a group of us in CTRIC were able to show **solidarity** with destitute refugees in their campaign for the right to work by going to London with them for a demonstration"

**MacDonald Road Methodist Church** have three new initiatives around **language**:-

- providing clear welcome signs outside the church in different languages
- having bibles available in different languages inside the church
- one of the readings each service is in a different language

**Sacred Heart Church** and **Coventry Quaker Meeting** are each cooking a **meal** once a month for the night shelter for refused refugees

**Broad Street Meeting Hall** have built an extension **storage area** for donated clothes and toiletries for new communities

**Coventry Peace House** have worked with refugees to produce a piece of **theatre** called 'Spirit Unbroken' which uses drama, songs, stories, poetry and humour to help the public understand the refugee experience, especially around statelessness - see event overleaf on June 21<sup>st</sup>



If you would like more information about anything in this newsletter, would like your organisation to sign up to City of Sanctuary or would like someone to come and talk to your group please contact Penny Walker on 02476 664616 or write to Coventry Peace House, 311 Stoney Stanton Road, Coventry, CV6 5DS or email [coventry@cityofsanctuary.org](mailto:coventry@cityofsanctuary.org) You may like to visit [www.cityofsanctuary.org](http://www.cityofsanctuary.org)

**and finally** - a quote from Antonio, a refugee from Angola who went to the national City of Sanctuary conference on June 3<sup>rd</sup> "I was very impressed with the way so many British people were thinking and working hard to find ways to be more welcoming to refugees. I found it quite overwhelming and such a contrast to the hostility we usually get"